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PROWLING RUSSIA'S  
FORBIDDEN ZONE

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Map by William H. Campbell © 1948 by The Curtis Publishing Company.

# Prowling Russia's Forbidden Zone

*A Secret Journey into Soviet Germany*

BY WERNER KNOPF



1949

NEW YORK • ALFRED A. KNOPF

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FIRST EDITION

## AUTHOR'S NOTE

This book is the outcome of a visit to Germany from May to August 1948 and especially of that part of my journey which, in June and July, took me into the forbidden Soviet zone of occupation. The characters and incidents described are real. But in order to protect the people who took the risk of assisting me, every care has been taken to disguise their identities. In one instance, i.e., my police encounters in Gernrode, it was necessary to describe a train journey that, in fact, had occurred elsewhere. My thanks are due to the editors of the *Saturday Evening Post* for permitting reproduction of those sections of this book which have appeared in serial form in the pages of the *Post*.

W. K.





# CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
<i>Introduction</i>	3
I <i>Secret Border Crossing</i>	7
II <i>Narrow Escape</i>	22
III <i>Zeiss for Russia</i>	30
IV <i>Anti-American Lecture</i>	42
V <i>Freedom Limited in Leipzig</i>	52
VI <i>Russians and Germans</i>	67
VII <i>Who Is Afraid of the Little Nazi?</i>	77
VIII <i>Surprising Company</i>	91
IX <i>Slav Bacon</i>	98
X <i>Light on the Soviets</i>	103
XI <i>The Prisoners of Pirna</i>	111
XII <i>A Difficult Stretch</i>	121
XIII <i>Atomic Age</i>	133
XIV <i>Return</i>	141
XV <i>Moschendorf</i>	149

XVI	<i>Girls without Glamour</i>	157
XVII	<i>Communist Courier</i>	166
XVIII	<i>Contrasts in Western Germany</i>	180
	<i>Conclusion: America's Frontier Is</i>	
	<i>on the Elbe</i>	195
	<i>Appendix</i>	199
	<i>Index</i>	follows page 200

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## INTRODUCTION

ON FEBRUARY 11, 1945, in a setting of vineyards, cypresses, and snow on the mountains, the Yalta Agreement was signed by Churchill, Roosevelt, and Stalin. It included a brief but fateful announcement scarcely noticed by the American and British public at the time. "Under agreed plans," the announcement went, "the forces of the three Powers will each occupy a separate zone of Germany." The French were to be admitted to the agreement at a later date. Thus came into being the partition of Germany into four zones of occupation; each zone with its own military government, each molded after the social and political principles of the occupying power, and each, after the shortest of interludes, finding the victors in eager competition for the affections of their "indigenous" populations.

There was a further announcement "that co-ordinated administration and control has been provided for under the plan through a control commission . . . with headquarters in Berlin." What has become of this part of the Yalta Agreement is already a matter of historical record.

Soon after the Crimean Conference, American

and British troops broke through the German defense on the Rhine and swept through Western Germany. They conquered a large part of the area allotted to the Russians at Yalta—Thuringia, Saxony, parts of Mecklenburg and Saxe-Anhalt—and they would have gone on to Berlin if the Russians had not requested them to pause.

The situation in which the United States and Britain found themselves was unexpected. Since the fall of 1944, when the European Advisory Commission had drawn the zonal borders of Germany on the tacit assumption that the Russians would be the first to enter Central Germany, two important developments had taken place. The first was that the Western powers and not the Russians had occupied Central Germany. The second, that in the months gone by, the Western allies had become increasingly disturbed by the mounting evidence of Soviet intransigence.

Central Germany thus became a pawn in the growing dissensions of the Great Powers. The fate of Berlin, Austria, and of the quadripartite control of Germany hung in the balance. For two months the moves and countermoves continued behind the scenes before agreement was reached.

On July 3, 1945, the American and British armies were withdrawn, while the Soviet Army marched westward to occupy the strategic heart of Europe, a belt of German territory one hundred miles wide and two hundred and fifty miles long. Simultaneously the Western allies took up

a precarious position in isolated Berlin. They moved in under solemn Russian guarantees, the value of which proved transitory.

To the Soviets had fallen the whole of Eastern and most of Central Germany. Nearly half of this they handed over to Polish administration and colonization, while the northeastern part of East Prussia was incorporated into the Soviet Union. The remainder constitutes the present Soviet zone of occupation, delimited by the Oder-Neisse line in the east, the Baltic Sea in the north, the Czech frontier in the south, and the Anglo-American zones in the west.

With an area of 46,600 square miles and a population of 17,400,000, the Soviet zone is the largest of the four zones and the least densely populated. It is the only part of postwar Germany that has a surplus of agricultural production. At the same time some of the most important German industries, especially the chemical and textile ones, are located there.

The Soviets have divided their area of Germany into five *Länder* states: Mecklenburg, Brandenburg, Saxe-Anhalt, Saxony, and Thuringia. Each state has its own German administration, with a Prime Minister and a Cabinet, and in theory is subject to the will of a democratically elected State Parliament. In actual fact the *Länder* governments are tightly controlled by the Communist Party and, of course, the Soviet Military Administration. A German central government for the

Soviet zone is in preparation and is being pre-natally groomed for its future role as a national government of a United Germany. In the meantime an "Economic Commission" carries on most of the functions of a central authority.

The highest authority is the Military Governor, Marshal Sokolovsky. He is also the Supreme Commander of the Army of Occupation, which numbers roughly 300,000 men. With its twenty-six divisions and twenty-eight air regiments, to which are attached another nine divisions stationed in Poland, the Soviet Army of Occupation is not only numerically stronger than the three other armies of occupation combined, but it also represents the most powerful fighting force in Europe today.

In three and a half years of occupation the Soviets have changed the face of their part of Germany beyond recognition. During that time they have drawn the curtain of secrecy more tightly over this part of Europe than anywhere else outside their own frontiers.

The Soviet zone of Germany is forbidden territory to the outside world. For the journalist who wanted to examine this confidential Soviet blueprint for a Communist Germany there remained no alternative but to discard the usual procedure of foreign news gathering and to go without the knowledge, permission, or encouragement of the Russian authorities.

Washington, D. C.

February 1949

## CHAPTER I

### SECRET BORDER CROSSING



FOR AN HOUR I had sat in the old German inn, waiting for the guide who was to smuggle me over the border into the Soviet zone of occupation. A violent rainstorm had kept people away from the Forst Haus and I was alone among the antlers, the steins, and the polished pewter. There wasn't a glimpse of the scenic beauty for which the heart of the Harz Mountains is famed. The tall pine trees stood dark and shadowy in the rain clouds that drifted slowly over the ground.

The guide was being sent by the anti-Communist underground in the Soviet zone. They had promised me in Berlin that he would be one of their most experienced men, and I had paid a thousand marks for his services—a small fortune in the new German currency.

But when I saw him, my first impulse was to quit. He was at least sixty years old; nothing but bones, skin, and bristles, and with two incredibly small eyes in the face of a tippler. The only sturdy

thing about him appeared to be a carved oaken staff into which heavy nails had been driven.

He raised his cap with a sweeping gesture, splashing rain water across the table, and introduced himself awkwardly: "My name is Ritter. I assume you're the gentleman who wants to go for a walk? I'm at your service."

I offered him a drink and he asked for a *Schnaps*. The innkeeper brought it and asked: "Any news from Berlin?"

"Nothing that's good," said Ritter.

I felt tense and called for a large *Schnaps*.

The old man held out his hands. "One moment," he said. "How much of that did you have?" and he pointed at my empty wineglass.

"Half a bottle of red wine," I answered.

"That's enough for today," he said brusquely. "You'll have need to keep your wits together. Let's discuss our business now."

He rose and showed me to the far corner of the room, while the innkeeper grinned impudently from behind the bar. Ritter looked me over, then asked how heavy I was.

"One hundred and eighty pounds."

"That's bad. You don't look in good shape, you know; you're too fat."

"I know I am," I said. "I thought fattening up would help me along in the Soviet zone if I've trouble in feeding myself there."

"Well, you'll have trouble in following me," he persisted. "I'll have to take you on a ten hours'

walk that will floor anybody but an old mountain goat like myself."

When I told him I was in better shape than I looked, he merely said: "We'll see," and gave me the all-over look again. "What about those clothes you are wearing? Anything American among them?"

"No, they're all German clothes," I said.

"What about your luggage?" he asked.

"All I carry is my shaving tackle, some handkerchiefs, a comb, money, a watch, and my papers; and none of this is American-made."

He smiled. "Except your papers."

"No," I said; "they're German-made too. Your Berlin friends supplied them."

There was a pause. The guide looked toward the window. It was only six in the afternoon, but outside it was grayish dark, although the rain had stopped. Suddenly he turned around.

"You really want to go through with this?" he asked. And before I could say anything, he continued: "You know, the Ivan has moved a lot of German police to the border recently?"

"Yes, I know," I said.

He looked at me silently for an instant. "They've orders to shoot at sight, and the swine like it. Only yesterday they shot an old man in no man's land. They used dum dum bullets that practically tore off his right leg. He was left lying in the woods crying for help until a Russian patrol came and took away his overcoat and rucksack.



After a while the Tommy rescued him and brought him to Bad Harzburg."

I told him I knew very well how dangerous an illegal border crossing into the Soviet zone had become, but I had figured all the angles. "If you think your chances are good enough to take me over," I said, "I'll take my chances about the rest."

He shook his head. "The odds of getting over are fifty-fifty, but they are eighty-twenty against your remaining undetected once you're there. Still, that's your lookout."

Half an hour later we were on our way. Ritter had given me a few simple instructions: to keep as close behind him as possible and to do exactly as he would do. "If I stop, stop. If I lie down, lie down. Watch every movement of mine. Don't say a word and, above all, don't give me advice."

My confidence in Ritter had risen all the time. The pace he was now setting belied his appearance still further. The going was rough. The road, twisting and turning in hairpin bends, had been churned up by torrents of water, and I was glad when Ritter took a small path springy with pine needles. We were going parallel with the road but a hundred feet higher on the mountainside.

It was obvious we were close to the border. Notice boards in English and German warned of the nearness of the Soviet zone of occupation. "Nearest authorized crossing point: Braunlage-Elend." On the road below us a British scout car stood forlorn among the pine trees. Two German

customs men in bright-green uniforms were talking to a dismal group of men and women. They were rain-sodden and weighed down by bundles and suitcases stacked high on their shoulders.

"They're from the Soviet zone. They're lucky they got away from the Russians—and with all that luggage too," Ritter said.

The weather had cleared up a little, and Ritter decided to wait an hour until it got dark enough to cross into no man's land. We sat down on a fallen tree, and the old man closed his eyes and seemed to be asleep. I tried to relax but couldn't. I was annoyed at Ritter for ordering this halt. The last thing I wanted now was to think. But I had no choice, and my mind went back to the National Press Club in Washington, where a lunch-hour conversation had started me on this enterprise.

An English friend had been telling me about his unsuccessful efforts to visit the Soviet zone. The Russians had insisted on a conducted tour, and he had turned that down. "If only I could speak German like a German," he had said, "I would go secretly over the border, and the Russians could keep their permits and itineraries." Suddenly he had put his hand on my shoulder and asked: "Actually, old chap, why don't you do it?"

The idea had caught on. I had been born and educated in Germany. Perhaps my German had got a bit rusty after more than twelve years in

England and almost three years in the United States, but that could be brushed up. I knew my whereabouts in the Russian zone and I had friends living there.

Until 1947 it had not been too difficult to cross the zonal border between Soviet-occupied Germany and the West. But as tension between East and West had risen, the Russians had increased their efforts to end all border traffic. In 1947 alone, more than 500,000 residents of the Soviet zone had escaped into Western Germany. Hundreds of thousands more had gone to and fro between the two zones, visiting relatives and friends or engaging in a little black-marketing. They had represented the last existing living contact between the totalitarian East and the democratic West—a link that Moscow was determined to break.

To this had come the effect of the change in American policy toward desertions from the Soviet Army. Until the beginning of 1948 the American Army had punctiliously honored the American-Soviet agreement under which all deserters would be returned to their respective armies of origin. Thousands of Russians had been handed back. After the failure of the London Conference the agreement had been quietly disregarded and the escaped Russians permitted to remain in the Western zones. Knowledge of this had leaked through into the Soviet armies, and after that the number of desertions had risen steadily.

With hundreds of thousands of Soviet troops in Germany exposed to some degree of contact with Western civilization, the necessity of sealing the border to the West had become an imperative act of self-preservation on the part of the masters of the Kremlin. The Russian-controlled German police, Soviet troops, and secret police of the MVD<sup>1</sup> who were guarding the border zone had been increased greatly in the first few months of 1948. And since the beginning of the Berlin crisis this five-hundred-mile-long stretch of forests, fields, and mountains had become the most closely guarded frontier in Europe.

The experts I had consulted in Washington had thrown cold water on my scheme. "If the Russians catch you traveling on forged German papers," they had said, "and if they find out you are a British citizen resident in America—well, we wouldn't like to be in your shoes." But I had felt that by careful planning many of the risks could be eliminated. After weeks of preparation in Western Germany and Berlin the crucial moment had come at last.

I looked up as Ritter stood before me. "We'd better be on our way now," he said, and, shouldering his staff like a rifle, he led the way as he walked into the scraggy blueberry bushes that formed the only undergrowth. I thought with

<sup>1</sup> MVD stands for *Ministrystvo Vnutryeniy Dyel* or Ministry of Internal Affairs. It was previously known as the Cheka, GPU, and NKVD. Sweet child has many names, goes a Russian proverb.

nostalgia of the wild woods opposite my house in Maryland and what fine cover they would make.

We plodded uphill on a steep slope, and when we came to the top we found ourselves in the open. As far as I could see in the growing darkness, trees had been cleared. "Crawl as low as you can; half a mile down from here is the border creek," Ritter whispered.

Crawling on one's belly over half a mile of rough downhill country proved an exhausting mode of peregrination, and I was glad when we came to the creek. Big piles of timber had been stacked up there and gave excellent cover. The creek was in flood and shot along noisily between two large rocks.

"Give me a hand," Ritter said almost inaudibly. From the side of a log pile we dragged a heavy board to which a rope had been tied on one end, and raised it vertically. While I held the lower end to the ground, Ritter let the rope out slowly, lowering the board to the other bank without any noise. We wobbled over and carried our bridge into the high ferns.

"Here we are," I thought, and was surprised at myself for feeling so relieved. Ritter was going very slowly now, stopping every time a branch snapped underfoot. It had grown quite dark among the firs, and I could not see more than a few feet ahead. Suddenly the woods sprang to life with a terrifying uproar. The staccato of au-

tomatic gunfire burst into the silence like the devil's tattoo. And all around us there broke loose a pandemonium of running feet, snapping branches, and dull thuds that was more frightening still.

We had thrown ourselves flat to the ground. For a while neither of us moved. Then Ritter crawled close. "That's deer breaking away," he whispered. "This is a new tactic the Ivan started a few days ago. He fires into the woods to scare people from coming over the creek. At least we know he won't roam around here while the firing goes on. He's shooting from the top of this slope; so keep as close to the ground as you can."

The firing continued over a large area. It died away in the distance and then started again viciously, close by. We crawled on, close to the ground, and I cursed for not having a pair of gloves, for my hands were torn by branches and briars.

Ritter motioned me to his side and said: "There's a road up in front and we've got to cross it. That's the worst bit. Let's try to get there before they cease firing." And he crawled off at a speed that I found difficult to match.

When we came to the edge of the wood along the road, I was worried to find how light it was, for I could distinguish the trees on the other side, and that was at least thirty feet away. We lay there motionless, my head close to Ritter's heels. After a while the suspense became unbearable and

I touched his foot—a vicious kick showed that he was as tense as I was. The shooting had stopped now.

At that moment the headlights of a car showed up the road in a white glare. A lump rose in my throat—among the trees on the other side of the road stood two Russian soldiers, their epaulets bright red against the darkness. More I did not see, for the car was coming up fast and my head went down to the ground. Ludicrously, I had to think of ants—of what would happen now if we had crawled close to an anthill, as it had once happened to me during night maneuvers in the British Army.

I looked up when the car was level with us. It was a long, open vehicle crowded with uniformed men. Some fifty yards to the right it stopped. A squeakish voice shouted something, and five soldiers carrying Tommy guns came out of the woods. There was a babble of talking, and the car drove on. For a while the men milled around, and then their talk and the clatter of their feet grew more distant.

We lay there for what seemed an eternity. At last Ritter said: "Take off your shoes and follow me over the road. There may be a few Ivans left, but I don't think so."

Another fifteen seconds and we were across. Again we lay flat on the ground. The silence of the night had returned. An insect walked over my hand and disappeared.

Slowly and cautiously, we crawled a foot or two at a time. It had grown completely dark under the trees, and when we moved, sometimes to the right and sometimes to the left, I lost all sense of direction and merely marveled at Ritter, who made his way like a blind man in a familiar place. Occasionally the dry branches of the pines would break under our knees with a loud snap, and I hated them with an unreasoning fury.

After a while Ritter stood up. "I think we're clear," he said; "we can walk now." And he set a terrific pace, two hours of going uphill and downhill. Two more roads and two railways were crossed, yet without any special precaution.

After this came the pleasantest part of the night. We had come out of the woods, and our path twisted among the meadows by the banks of the River Bode. Right and left the mountains rose, and for the first time we were passing close by houses.

A few times we made detours to avoid going through villages, and once something big and shadowy sided up with us and gave us a scare. However, it wasn't a pooka—only a horse. Then the scenery changed abruptly and the valley became narrow, until it was a wild gorge, with its fir-clad sides rising steeply many hundreds of feet.

"We're almost out of the Russian safety belt," Ritter said. His voice became passionate. "Nice safety this! Oh, how I hate the Ivan, making us



stalk like murderers and thieves through our own country!"

We had left the path and were scrambling over rocks by the side of the river bed. I had already got wet feet from slipping into the water, and Ritter decided to wait until it grew lighter.

"We're close to the Hexentanzplatz," he said, pointing into the sky ahead. "That's where the witches are supposed to dance at their nocturnal meetings. But they don't come any more now. They're leading us a dance all over Germany—they and all the devils from the steppes of Asia."

I was so tired I couldn't say anything but "Yes" and "Ah-a," and the old man returned to his former silence until it had become light enough to continue on our way.

Shortly afterward we waded through the Bode in three feet of water. I slipped and my suit got a thorough soaking.

This was awkward. The suit was made of ersatz fibers. It now was crumpled and torn, and my right knee showed through a big hole in the pants. "A fine beginning on my first day in Sovietland," I thought. "If this doesn't get the police after me, nothing else will."

We climbed up the steep rock face, and when we came to the top it was almost daylight. Below us to the northeast the Harz Mountains disappeared into the haze hanging over the plains of Saxe-Anhalt.

This last bit had taken it out of me. I was so weary I was past caring. We had been going for more than ten hours. The next two miles, downhill and on the field paths of rich farming country, I walked as in a trance. But when I found myself in a farmyard, the sight of a barefooted peasant woman, with her flaxen hair and bright-blue summer dress, revived me considerably.

She must have expected us. It took Ritter only a few minutes to drink a glass of milk and tell her to look after me for the day. Then a handshake, good wishes, and he walked away.

My hostess was the owner of the farm—one of the 40,000 women farmers in the Soviet zone. But when I asked her for some food, a glass of milk was all she was willing to give me. She said the People's Control, set up to check on food deliveries, had paid her three visits recently. She had been unable to fulfill her delivery quotas, and rather than be accused of sabotage, she was buying food in the black market.

"That's why I'm taking the risk of sheltering illegal *Grenzgänger*—border crossers—like you," she said. "I need the money." I inquired why she couldn't fill her quota, since the land seemed to be good.

She explained: "It's the lack of fertilizer and shortage of machinery," and went on to denounce the Communist government for taking all and giving nothing.

I was famished, and offered to pay anything for some food. When she saw I had money, she brought me a little bread and cheese, lent me an old pair of trousers, and took my clothes to clean and mend.

I went to sleep on a straw paillasse in the barn. Tired as I was, I must have slept lightly, for when Ritter entered a few hours later, I woke up with a start.

"I've come back to warn you not to go to Leipzig via Magdeburg," he said. "The Ivan has big troop concentrations in the area northeast of here. If I were you, I'd go south into Thuringia and to Leipzig from there."

This was serious news. It meant a complete change of plans for the next few days. But Ritter was right. I could not risk going to Magdeburg. He had brought a map along, and we worked out a new route. When he left I noticed how much grayer his bristly face looked. His gaunt frame seemed more bent, yet he walked off with the same sprightly gait as on the previous night.

We met again six weeks later over a bottle of wine near Brunswick. There he told me something of his other charges he had brought safely over the border: Soviet officers and prominent members of the German administration fleeing from the Soviet zone; Socialist underground couriers from Hannover and Frankfurt crossing into Soviet territory; intelligence agents going to and

fro; Polish priests; wealthy Czech businessmen; half-starved German refugees; and Russians from the concentration camps of the MVD. Ritter, lone and intrepid knight of the cold war, had guided them all.

## CHAPTER II

### NARROW ESCAPE



AFTER SOME MORE SLEEP in the barn I walked to the small town of Gernrode on a road flanked by cherry trees. The countryside and the little town looked so peaceful that the exertions of the night seemed almost unnecessary and theatrical. The feeling of anticlimax grew as I came to the railway station. No signs of Russians, no Tommy guns—only a small crowd of holidaymakers, sprinkled with the blue blouses and red neckties of the Communist youth organization.

But as I went to buy my ticket I saw a red banner: BERLIN, NOT FRANKFURT, IS THE CAPITAL OF GERMANY, and below it two policemen were checking the identity cards of people coming out. I kept away from them and went on the platform.

It was a typical German week-end crowd; the women, who were the majority, in tight-fitting, gay dirndl frocks; the men, drab-looking in shorts and threadbare jackets. They all looked shabbier

than the people in Western Germany, and less healthy.

The narrow-gauge mountain train was late. When it stopped, there was a furious scramble for window seats, and I was pushed into a dilapidated carriage. A sour old woman accused me of having jostled her and broken the strap of her rucksack. I watched the temper of the grownups, their irascibility toward one another, and it bore all the signs of a people living under great stress.

The children were more cheerful. They brought out mouth organs, their songs drowning the rattles of the rickety old train, so that I was quite sorry to leave them when we stopped in Harzgerode. Again I was pushed along by the crowd, and this time, slowly but inexorably, in the direction of two police officers. They picked out two men and demanded to see their papers.

"This is it," I thought. The moment that I had pictured in my mind a dozen times was there. I had never used false papers before.

"Your papers!"

I showed my identity card: "Wilhelm Sommers, Görlitz, Karl Marx Strasse 5. Born: December 29, 1911. Profession: Employee."

"Your employment book," the other policeman said.

I took out the little buff book with the Nazi swastika on each page and gave it to him. When my Berlin friends had handed it to me, I had laughed and thought it a hoax. But they had as-

sured me that most of the employment books in use in the Russian zone were still the old Nazi documents.

The policeman who had looked at the identity card handed it back to me. But his colleague took a long time leafing through the pages of the book. Present employment, it said, was with the "Central Administration for Popular Enlightenment" in the Soviet zone.

I was counting the pimples in the policeman's face to stop myself from getting panicky. At last he looked at me. "Oh, you're with the Central Administration, are you?" he asked, and returned the book.

They did not ask for my ration card, and I assumed that they were satisfied with my papers. But I hesitated to walk away, feeling that I must betray my relief in every movement. Thus, when one of them asked: "Have you been in Berlin recently?" I was glad to talk.

"Yes, I've just come from there," I said.

"Do you think there'll be war?" he asked.

My mood had now changed, and I felt reckless. "Of course," I said, "it's only a question of time." A look of dismay came on their faces. "Surely," I continued, "it's the only way of getting the Americans out of Europe, isn't it?" And I pointed to a Communist poster on the wall that read "Withdrawal of all occupation troops will be possible only in a united Germany. In a Germany divided by the Western imperialists, economic dis-

tress, disunity, and a spirit of revenge are constantly disrupting the life of our Fatherland. It's your patriotic duty to fight for a united Germany."

One policeman chewed his fingernails and said: "I think we can drive the Americans to the Atlantic in a week." But there was no conviction in his voice. The other officer merely looked glum.

I thought this was enough, and left. A fat little man who had been reading a newspaper started to walk along with me. He said he was interested in my remark about the certainty of war. Before I could answer he was shooting questions at me: What was I doing here? On holiday? Where was I staying? Oh, in Gernrode? With relatives? He had such a job finding a hotel; could I give him advice? What was Görlitz like these days, with half the town in Polish and the other half in German hands? And could I tell him whether the opera house had been rebuilt? It took only a few minutes of this to convince me he was a police agent. For half an hour I did my level best to allay his suspicions, but my best seemed to be a very poor one.

The first thing was to gain time. I had already given up my plans of thumbing a ride toward Jena, for he might have arrested me then and there. So I told him I was going to walk back to Gernrode to get some stiff exercise.

"If you don't mind, I'll accompany you for a while," he said, and I thought it too risky to send him away.



Dusk was falling over the fir-clad mountains. The road was crowded with week-enders, cyclists, and farmers returning from work. "If we go slowly enough," I thought, "we can delay getting to the Mägdesprung until it gets fairly dark. There is a maze of roads and paths up there, and if I can get away at all, it will be there."

We had walked some distance when the fat man remarked: "Police blockade." Ahead of us in the semidarkness two policemen were checking papers. They seemed to have been swamped by the heavy Saturday-night traffic, for a considerable and impatient crowd was waiting to be let through. On the other side some forty or fifty boys and girls with bicycles stood in a long line while their leader argued with one of the policemen.

My escort seemed to be in a hurry, for he pushed his way forward among the people on our side of the road. Their ugly mood flared up, and several women denounced him furiously for trying to get ahead of them. One of them became so incensed that she took her wicker basket and began to pummel him, screaming that people like him waxed fat while the ordinary people were being bossed and starved.

At that moment the cyclists were being let through from the other side. There was a melee of bicycles and children, angry women and little handcarts, farmers and horses. My fat companion, who until then had kept an eye on me, tried to

disentangle himself when he saw I was lagging behind. But the women, too glad to have found an object for their anger, stood in his way, and he had to turn to ward off the blows of the woman with the basket.

It took me only a second to slip to the other side of the road, where a youngster was about to push off. I begged him to take me along, and, to my surprise, he simply said: "All right." I stepped on the prolonged rear axle with which German bicycles are fitted, held on to his shoulders, and we coasted downhill.

When I turned around, a whole bevy of cyclists was following us, and the darkness and the bend of the road lay between me and the fat man.

A little afterward I told the boy to let me go. He stopped and asked: "You are in the black market, aren't you?"

He showed disgust on discovering that I was not a channel for the disposal of gin and rubber goods, which, he said, he and his girl friend wanted to sell. I asked him how old she was, and he said: "Thirteen, like myself."

I gave him some money, and walked on a stubble field until I thought I could no longer be seen from the road. A reaction set in as soon as I was alone, and I lay down behind a shock of wheat, unable to decide what to do next. Then the chill of the night crept into my bones and I had to get up.

Hours later, after I had tried in vain to thumb

a ride on the road, the pale glare of an acetylene lamp showed a truck driver changing a wheel. For a while I watched, making sure he was alone. But when I walked up and he heard my footsteps, he swung round with his jack handle raised, ready to strike, and I had to retreat in a hurry.

It required a great deal of talking and almost as much money to make him take me along. I explained that my home was in Chemnitz and that I had been visiting a girl friend in the Western zone.

"But how can you afford to pay me what I'm asking for?" he questioned.

"Black market," I answered, and, like the cyclist, he seemed to think that I looked the part.

Every time the heavy truck lunged into one of the potholes with which the road was covered, the driver cursed. His tires were all ready for the scrap heap, he said. And he told me that his firm, the Kant chocolate works, in Wittenberg, had a fleet of eleven heavy trucks, but only fifteen tires for the lot.

"They tell us it's because England refuses to send us tires from its part of Germany," he said. "But half of our chocolate production goes to the Russians. So why don't they send us some tires in return?"

He was anxious to hear about conditions in Western Germany. Was it true what everybody was saying—that things had become so much better there recently? I told him it was so; that the

big increase in food imports under the Marshall Plan and the success of the currency reform had led to an improvement that had been quite miraculous.

"How has the currency reform worked out here?" I asked.

"Lousy!" said he. "Things are getting worse all the time."

I was getting so drowsy my eyes would not stay open, and I asked him whether I could crawl on the sunflower-seed sacks in the back of the truck and sleep. It was all right with him. In a hollow between some sacks, I took off my shoes and fell asleep almost before I had lain down. When I awoke I saw the silhouette of bombed buildings stand out grotesquely against the early sky. The driver was bending over me.

"We're in Jena," he said. "You've got to get off."

## CHAPTER III

### ZEISS FOR RUSSIA



THE MORNING was cold and damp; it was half past five. The driver told me I had slept through two military check points, one on the open road and the other in Weimar. But the Russians had been sleepy and he hadn't bothered to tell them about my being in the back. Wasn't that worth an extra fifty marks? I said yes, surely, and I would pay him another fifty marks if he would get me something to eat.

"You can have these sandwiches," he said. "I'll get my girl friend to buy me some food later on, but fifty marks won't be enough. The black market is expensive around here. Make it seventy."

This was outrageous. The actual cost of the sandwiches at controlled prices was perhaps one mark. But after my fast of twenty-four hours I would have paid anything for a little food.

I had not shaved or washed; my suit was wrinkled and dusty. A crust of yellow mud covered my trouser cuffs and shoes. I could not possibly walk into Jena looking like that.

The driver had a suggestion. It was, I felt, influenced by the profitable disposal of his sandwiches. He would take me to his friend, who was employed in the Zeiss works and shared a room with another girl. "Of course," he went on, "it'll cost you something."

Fortunately I was well supplied with "sticker marks," the improvised new notes of the Soviet zone, so called because of the small paper stamps that distinguished them from the old bank notes. I had bought them on the black market at Helmstedt station in the British zone. A shabbily dressed youngster had come up to me and whispered his offer of cigarettes. On hearing that I was looking for Russian marks he had rushed off and returned with his "banker," another youthful individual whose pockets were bulging with money. Brought into the Anglo-American zone by border crossers from the East, the Russian marks sold at a discount ranging anywhere from fifty to a humiliating eighty per cent, although officially they were supposed to stand at par.

We drove through the empty streets of Jena. Bedraggled red banners, with their ever recurring themes of hatred and execration, hung from houses and across streets. The town was damaged through bombing, but not nearly so much as one might have expected in a place that had housed the greatest optical industry in Europe.

The driver left his truck in a garage and we walked a few blocks to an apartment house. In-

side, the staircase was covered with political posters. One of them, a yard high, announced: REMEMBER YOU ARE A GERMAN! FIGHT FOR A FREE GERMANY, JOIN THE SED.<sup>1</sup>

As we climbed up the flights of steps I saw a notice describing the location of the nearest telephone. It was to be used in emergency only, and it was four blocks away. I expressed surprise at this and asked the driver what had become of the telephones in the Soviet zone. When I had said that, I had an awful sensation of having come out in my true colors. But either the driver had not heard my question correctly or he had not realized its significance. For he remarked that he thought so too—a telephone four blocks away was of no use at all. On the top floor, fastened to the door frame, seven paper cards bore the names, professions, dates of birth, and registration numbers of the residents.

Frau Grube, the driver's friend and a typical *Hausfrau*, was a war widow. Her only child had died in a cattle wagon when the Germans were driven out of Danzig. Now she worked as a packer in the Zeiss factory. Her friend Mary, young and with a keen, intelligent face that was tanned a healthy brown, was the secretary of one of the Russian managers of Zeiss.

The coffee for breakfast was a mixture of roasted roots and cereals. It tasted bitter, but not too unpleasant. There was no milk, no butter, no

<sup>1</sup> See appendix.

eggs. Just two thick slices of brown bread and some distasteful rutabaga jam. A bowl of fresh plums followed.

Mary left to attend Mass. Frau Grube cleared away the dishes, and after I had changed into an old gown, she cleaned and ironed my suit.

It had been my intention to leave early, but when Mary returned, the hope of collecting information about Zeiss made me ask if I could stay for lunch.

"Why don't you eat in a restaurant?" she asked suspiciously.

"I've lost my ration card," I answered, but I could see she did not believe me. She began to quiz me about my job, where I came from, where I was going.

The driver decided to have a look at his truck, and Frau Grube went along with him. I felt I had to give the girl a more plausible explanation of traveling the way I did, and I told her I was living in the Western zone and had gone into the Soviet zone in order to visit a friend. It was as far as I dared go. However, she was not an easy person to convince, and it was only after much questioning that she accepted my statement.

"You've taken a risk being frank with me," she said after a while, "for I could turn you over to the police. I am going to be equally frank with you. I'm going to leave for the Western zone at the first opportunity."

She asked me many questions about obtaining



permission to live there, and I was glad I could give her advice. Then she told me about herself, how she had become engaged to a young technician, and how, just before their wedding, he had been taken to Russia, together with other Zeiss specialists. They had kept up a regular correspondence, and parcels had occasionally arrived from him. He had been the only reason why she had kept on working for the Russians. But now, after more than three years of waiting, she had given up hope of his early return.

She showed me some snapshots taken in and around Moscow, and I remarked that the deported specialists looked quite prosperous.

"They are treated well," she said, "paid well, and given privileges regarding housing and food. But even so, they're bitterly homesick. Their contacts are limited to a few scientists; otherwise they are an isolated community, and their group isn't large enough to be self-contained."

We heard the driver and Frau Grube coming down the corridor, and she said: "Don't tell them your home is in the West. People are so easily frightened here. They might think you're a spy." During lunch—boiled potatoes and onion sauce with a slice of bread—the two women complained bitterly about the shortage of food and how only the occasional extras that the secretary received from her Russian chief were keeping them reasonably healthy.

Afterward Mary helped me to piece together the postwar story of Zeiss. At the end of the war this optical arsenal—manufacturer of lenses, microscopes, and other optical measuring devices, operating lamps, range finders, and bombsights—employed some 14,000 people. In April 1945, American troops occupied Jena and brought with them a staff of experts of the Army Signal Corps Engineering Laboratories. On June 22nd, as the Army pulled out of Central Germany, it took with it the Zeiss collection of lenses, part of the scientific records, and almost the entire scientific and business staff—eighty-three in all. Most of these men went to Oberkochen in the American zone, where they founded a new optical industry, the Zeiss-Opton works. Others went into the British zone and joined the staff of Zeiss-Winkel, at Göttingen.

When the Russians arrived they made a great effort to restart production. They put military detachments in the factory, appointed their own management, and saw to it that the entire output went to Russia.

Everything went well for more than a year. Then, in the darkness of the early morning of October 24, 1946, the homes of three hundred technical specialists and workmen were surrounded by troops. A Soviet officer, accompanied by an interpreter and two soldiers, entered each house and told the men to prepare to leave im-

mediately. They could take their families, furniture, and personal effects, for which trucks were provided.

A few of the men had previously signed contracts to go to Russia, but the majority went only under the threat of force. There were many tragic scenes when three special trains left for Moscow, carrying the Zeiss workers and their families.

The very same day the dismantling of the factories began. The orders from Moscow were drastic; of 10,000 machines, they left 582 and a promise to support reconstruction. Originally the Russian orders had been to dismantle the entire factory and to leave nothing. But popular feeling in the zone, especially among people normally sympathetic to the Communists, ran so high that the Soviets thought it wise to make concessions.

Contrary to similar operations elsewhere in the zone, the shipment of the plant was supervised by capable officers who took every precaution with the precious instruments and machines. Yet the old proverb of scratching a Russian and finding a Tartar held true even here. As the officers were paid a bonus based on the weight of the shipments prepared by them, they took everything movable, whether of value or not. When one of them had the idea of removing all the radiators, his colleagues sent out detachments to the apartment houses of the Zeiss works and had the heavy radiators removed from there. Despite the care taken

in Jena, the Russians reaped only a limited advantage from these reparations, since the greater part was damaged or lost in transit. A recent official Soviet estimate has put at twenty per cent the amount of machinery found useful after its transfer.

By March 1947, when the dismantling process was finished, nearly half the Zeiss workers had lost their jobs. The others carried out a remarkable feat of reconstruction, and today Zeiss employs more than eight thousand workers. Of these, five thousand are employed on regular production, and the rest on reconstruction work.

Later, in Dresden, one German scientist completed the story for me. "The Russians," he said, "have remedied one of the weakest spots in their war potential. They have jumped twenty years ahead in the field of optics. But," he added, "that's where they're stopping. If the Americans were stupid in handing Jena over to the Russians, they showed foresight by taking away with them the scientists, the planners on whose brains further progress depends. These the Russians don't have, and they will therefore be no further in five or ten years than they are now."

I asked Mary: "How can anybody be sure Zeiss won't be shipped to Russia a second time?"

"We can't, of course," she replied. "As a matter of fact, we've had cases recently where the technicians rebuilt an old machine with improved de-

vices, copied it, and then had to send all the new machines to Russia before they could even start production here. But, on the whole, the Russians seem to feel now that they fare best by taking ninety per cent of our output, rather than go through the whole process of *démontage* again. Still, they are an incalculable people, and anything may happen."

I asked: "How do you get along with your Russian chief?"

She laughed. "Oh, he's all right—very intelligent and very fond of women. But as he doesn't drink, I'm safe with him." Then she became serious and added: "That's the worst about the Russians—their dissolute drinking. They are good-natured normally, but when they're drunk, they first get unbearably sentimental and then completely uncontrollable. Only last week three soldiers were shot for going on a raping jaunt."

"So the authorities do take action?" I asked.

"Oh, yes," she said. "They've tried hard to improve discipline, and conditions are much better than they used to be. But even now their first reaction to any complaint from a German is to attribute the crime to 'German bandits in Soviet uniforms.'"

When the driver and Frau Grube returned, he boasted of the bargain he had made by selling chocolate for Russian cigarettes and German gin. Buying liquor in the black market was always a

risky business in Germany. But the driver had made sure. As the gin was in an earthen bottle, he had insisted on tasting it and had found it to be the best German Steinhäger.

"You must try it," he offered, and filled three small glasses. But when he came to his own, no more came out of the bottle. He shook it and peered into it. "It must be almost full," he said. Furious, he threw the bottle to the floor, but it did not break. In the end a blow smashed it, revealing a solid chunk of plaster of Paris inside.

I decided to leave, and Mary said she would go for a little walk and come too. Jena had a Sunday atmosphere, with people strolling aimlessly through the streets. They wore their Sunday best, but their clothes, especially the shoes, were the shabbiest things I ever saw. Mary said that they had not had a major piece of clothing in years, and I could well believe it. Their drawn faces, tired eyes, and shuffling gait stood in shocking contrast to the well-fed robustness of the Russians and the German police. The latter seemed to have been picked for good strong physique, substantial bosoms, and pretty curls, for they were mostly women.

"The men have either gone to strengthen the border police or are being trained in military formations as a nucleus of our People's Army," my companion explained.

"Are these women any good?" I asked.

"Oh, yes; sea-green incorruptibles," she replied, with a laugh. "At least not half so corruptible as the men."

The shops displayed nothing but cardboard dummies and odds and ends of trash.

"Do you see that?" Mary said bitterly. "That is our currency reform. It hasn't brought a single shoe, saucer, toothbrush, eraser, or whatnot into the shops. A year ago we in the Soviet zone thought we were better off than the people in the West. Today we see that we are ruined, whereas the Western Germans seem to be really over the hump now."

The walls of many houses were covered with posters. We stopped before one and read the announcement of a special Sunday lecture in the university by I. Yermashov. It had an intriguing theme: "Who won the war: America or the Soviet Army? A necessary lesson for the understanding of current Anglo-American war preparations against the Soviet Union." The invitation was signed by the Society for the Study of the Culture of the Soviet Union. Admission was free, and I decided to go. Mary explained she had to swallow enough Communist propaganda without having to go to any lectures, and she went home.

A Russian soldier with a buxom girl walked past and stopped at a wooden fence covered with hand-written advertisements. He had white-blond hair and the shiny complexion of a boy who had just walked out of a bathtub after a scrubbing.

But his uniform was threadbare and much too small for him. Both he and the girl had a large bunch of wild flowers in their hands, and the soldier carried a small bunch of blue cornflowers in his cap. I heard him say something in broken German that made her laugh. Passers-by turned and looked at them with expressionless faces.

Except for a few small cars carrying Russian officers, the roads were almost empty of motor traffic. But there were plenty of bicycles—hundreds of them. They made me think of a discussion in Hamburg a few weeks ago. I had wanted to buy a bicycle and send it into the Soviet zone, but friends had warned me that the Russians had seized all the bicycles in their zone and that taking one over would make me so conspicuous that I would be picked up at once.

But if that story seemed rather ludicrous now, the Jena bicycles provided a significant commentary upon the Soviet zone's poverty as compared with Western Germany. They were old and junky, with patched-up tires, whereas in Western Germany new bicycles had appeared on the market in apparently unlimited quantities. Bicycle tires, which before the currency reform had cost a thousand marks on the black market, were now being offered for ten marks in the new currency, and people in Western Germany were buying them as American housewives might rush to buy T-bone steak at ten cents a pound.



## CHAPTER IV

### ANTI-AMERICAN LECTURE



THE FOUR-HUNDRED-year-old Friedrich Schiller University was easily found. Surrounded by ruined houses, its square clock tower, capped by an onion-shaped top and four small towers, sported a large Soviet flag. The steep roofs of the main building were a gay pattern of tiles, those which had been blown out by the blast of bombs having been replaced by others of a different color.

I had a strange feeling as I entered. A hundred years ago Jena University had stood in the forefront of progressive thinking in Germany. The history of this university had been bound up with much that had been best in the political and scientific life of Germany for several generations. Schiller, Hegel, and Fichte had taught here.

Then it had been the birthplace of the "*Burschenschaften*," the patriotic movement of German students for a united Germany. Now a different kind of German unity was being proclaimed here—a unity the Germans themselves did not desire.

Now its name was linked with the deportation of two of its professors to Russia, including the physicist Professor Schütz, the arrest of numerous students, and the disappearance without trace of others.

In the hall, among political posters and announcements of courses and lectures, there loomed the oddest piece of propaganda: a rusty safe with its door half open and a notice saying: "American backing for the new Western currency." Inside gleamed three rifles with bayonets fixed. The white marble bust of Schiller by Dannecker stood in a corner, dusty and inconspicuous.

The lecture hall was a blaze of color. Huge drapes of purple velvet bore the words: THE STUDY OF THE CULTURE OF THE SOVIET UNION IS A NATIONAL TASK OF THE GERMAN PEOPLE.

At a table, decked in red and surrounded by a fine array of chrysanthemums in pots, nine men and women were seated, three of them Soviet Army officers. A large Soviet flag, with the hammer and sickle embroidered in heavy gold, completed the picture. There were a few hundred people in the audience—workers, students, Soviet officers, and a mixture of middle-aged and elderly men and women who seemed to range from university professors to civil servants and officials of the SED, the Communist-controlled Socialist Unity Party.

The speaker, a little man in Russian uniform, addressed us in excellent German as "esteemed

audience, comrades." For two hours he developed his theme that a new war was being fomented by American imperialists with the aid of their British vassals. In order to make a new war acceptable to the ordinary people in the West, he said, the belief was being sold to them, first, that the Soviet Union wanted a war, and, second, that America could win it.

The first contention was so obviously absurd that he need say nothing about it. But in order to substantiate the claim of American superiority, an unprecedented falsehood was being spread—namely, the assertion that the destruction of Hitlerism was largely due to the Anglo-American war effort, including the invasion of France on June 6, 1944.

Yermashov then gave this historical outline: In the early spring of 1942, when the threat of a German victory still existed, the British and American governments promised Marshal Stalin that the second front would be opened in 1942. Shortly afterward the successes of the Soviet armies radically changed the military picture. It was now clear that Hitler could no longer win the war. Had the Allies fulfilled their solemn promise, the war could have been shortened by two years and countless lives would have been saved.

Instead, because they were no longer threatened with destruction, Britain and America decided to postpone their own determined participation in the war. For that they had two reasons, Yerma-

ov asserted. One, to let Germany and the Soviet Union fight it out; and, two, to continue reaping the superprofits of the armament industry.

The Anglo-American front in North Africa and Italy was a sideshow of no importance. As for the Allied air war against Germany, it became a costly farce. In order to preserve the German war industry and thus enable the Hitler armies to continue the war in Russia, hundreds of thousands of German women and children had to die in air attacks on civilian centers. At this point, the silence broke into loud cries of "Shame!"

In the meantime, Yermashov continued, up to the Hitlerite divisions were bleeding in the Soviet Union while no more than fifty or sixty had to be sent in the West. By May 1944 the Soviet offensives had made tremendous progress, and the British and American governments became alarmed at the prospect of the whole of Germany being occupied by Russia. Only at that moment did they decide to invade.

If the invasion succeeded, it was solely because the local German defense was almost without tanks, had no mobile artillery reserves, and, most important of all, had no support from the air. Besides this, there were the decisive errors of Hitler's leadership. In other words, declared Yermashov, the Anglo-American armies at no time had a serious opponent to contend with.

German resistance to the Western allies was further weakened as a result of the secret negotia-

tions for a separate peace carried on in Lisbon and Zurich between American and British emissaries on the one hand and defeatist Hitlerites on the other. These treacherous activities on the part of the imperialists had come to light through documents captured by the Soviets in the archives of the German Foreign Office. They had been published by the Soviet Bureau of Information. If nothing came of these negotiations, it was only because the tremendous victories of the Soviet armies so impressed the British and Americans that they dared not arouse our wrath.

Even then a relatively weak German force of eight hundred tanks nearly broke through the Allied armies in the Battle of the Bulge. So serious was the predicament of the Anglo-Americans that, on January 6, 1945, Churchill wrote to Marshal Stalin about the "alarming situation" and requested help. Stalin immediately had his Vistula offensive put forward by a week. It brought the Soviet armies to the Oder and smashed all hopes of further German resistance.

The Russian finished with these words: "The Soviet Army succeeded in destroying the enemy when he was at the height of his power. The Allies, on the other hand, had the greatest difficulty to advance against the Germans when the latter were bled white by their losses in the east. I ask you to remember these facts whenever you hear anybody speak of the strength of America."

There was no mistaking the effect Yermashov's

address had on his listeners. They applauded vigorously until the chairman called for questions.

Significantly, all the questions were about the atomic bomb. Nobody in the audience, which seemed to be Communist in its sympathies, questioned the accuracy of Yermashov's travesties. But they were clearly anxious to know whether the development of American atomic power had not brought an entirely new element into play.

There was a hush as Yermashov turned to one of the Soviet officers at the long table. The officer rose and said: "We aren't fools enough to tell our enemies what they can expect if they keep on sticking their pigs' snouts into our garden. But I can tell you if the Americans really believe that we do not have the atomic bomb, then they are living in the same fool's paradise as Hitler did when he thought we were without the tanks and the guns to match his own."

He paused, for a woman who was sitting closest to him at the long table had whispered something. The speaker cleared his throat and said: "A comrade in the audience has sent up a note inquiring whether it would be in order to ask a question about bacteriological warfare. Let me tell him this: Unlike atomic energy, bacteriological warfare involves no industrial problems. It is the cheapest kind of modern warfare. Yet it is an unseen enemy of terrible consequence. It so happens that our Soviet bacteriologists are internationally known to be leaders in their field."

It was almost dark as I left the university, and for a while I listened to the news being broadcast from a loud-speaker in a street. When I came to the station the last train to Leipzig had gone. I thought of spending the night in the crowded waiting room. But just as I was settling down I heard a dilapidated-looking individual warn another that the station was going to be raided by police. The pair made off in a hurry, and I followed, with my counterfeit identity papers acting as an irresistible propelling agent. In the end I became so tired of walking through the streets that I had to go and find shelter in the ruins of a bombed house.

As I sat there on a pile of flagstones, with the stench of decay coming out of the rubble around me, the fanatic untruths of Yermashov ringing in my ears, the loud-speakers blaring forth Russian music, and a drunken Soviet soldier talking to himself plaintively close by, it was as if some fantastic landslide had thrown this Thuringian city into the neighborhood of Stalingrad or Chelyabinsk. With elbows on my knees and head in my hands, I slept fitfully, waking up when in danger of toppling over or when the rats scurried around too loudly.

In the morning I felt stiff and washed out, but I had at least the satisfaction of having kept my suit in shape. The air was chilly. I had a cruel longing for a cup of hot coffee, and for the first time I could understand those many Germans

who have been exchanging their last pieces of jewelry or Meissen china for the fleeting possession of some American coffee. But not even a cup of substitute coffee was to be had in the station, to say nothing of breakfast. Propaganda posters had taken the place of menus.

I was shaving in the station lavatory when a rumpus outside attracted my attention. It appeared that two Zeiss workers were in trouble. According to an angry railway man, they had bought tickets for Magdeburg, and one of them had remarked that he hoped he would be able to see something of the American air bridge to Berlin.

"Yes," the other had answered, "wouldn't that be a grand sight?"

Their accuser furiously denounced the two as Fascists and subversives. "We know you Zeiss workers," he said; "you think you're aristocrats and too good for the working class. You ought to be sent to Russia, all of you."

I noticed how careful the bystanders were not to betray their own feelings. A policewoman arrived, and the railway man, who wore the badge of the People's Control—the "Nosy Parker" organization of the Communists—demanded the arrest of the two. After much argument the policewoman took the names and addresses of the men and let them go, while the crowd dispersed, their faces shadowy and inscrutable.

I had chosen to go to Leipzig on a local train



that stopped at every station, but I had not bargained on spending all day on a seventy-mile trip. The Russians have removed most of Eastern Germany's railway equipment, including 5,500 miles of tracks, as part of the \$8,000,000,000 worth of reparations they have taken out of their zone of occupation.

Except for a few fast trains between the major cities, the Russian-zone trains are the most decrepit, dangerous, and unreliable mediums of transportation in present-day Europe. The train I took had broken windows, and its original seats had been torn out for firewood during the harsh 1946 winter and later replaced with crude planks of timber. There were holes in the roof, and the lavatories were filthy, their walls covered with obscene scrawlings and anti-Communist phrases.

Four times the locomotive broke down under loud mechanical agonies, the result of both age and lignite. For lignite, the soft brown coal of Eastern Germany, has taken the place of the bituminous coal that no longer comes from the Ruhr and Silesia. In the absence of specially constructed combustion equipment, lignite has played havoc with the efficiency of transportation and industry in the Eastern zone.

Lignite has also left its mark on the Eastern German landscape with distressing regularity. Being soft, it emits a formidable shower of sparks from the locomotives, a beautiful sight at night but disastrous during the dry summers. Large

areas of wooded land by the side of the railroad looked black and scorched.

The passengers talked about nothing but their perplexities of travel, and by the time I arrived in Leipzig I had learned all there is to be learned about the tribulations of missed connections and belated arrivals.

## CHAPTER V

### FREEDOM LIMITED IN LEIPZIG



ALTHOUGH I was now deep in the Soviet zone, it was reassuring to come into a big city. There was a feeling of safety in numbers, and I no longer felt the same pressure as during the previous thirty-six hours. There was another reason why it seemed to be good to be in Leipzig. I had friends here, and they knew I was coming.

Karl and I had been fellow students in Frankfurt before Hitler's accession to power. A left-wing Socialist, he had returned to Germany from his English exile after the war. On my arrival in Berlin I had written to him and suggested a meeting. He had come immediately, but in the place of the pro-Russian I had expected, I had met a disillusioned member of the Socialist underground. He still held a job in the Saxony state government and was trusted by German and Russian Communists alike.

"We're going to run a serious risk taking care of you in Leipzig," he had said. "If the Russians ever suspect that we're helping an American jour-

nalist, there'll be a man hunt on that will beat anything we've seen in Leipzig so far." Then he had added: "But I think it's worth it." He had given me the address of a friend of his—Erik. To him I had mailed a number of food packages and a complete change of clothing, for the parcel post between Western and Soviet Germany was still functioning.

Erik turned out to be a young engineer, living with Kay, his wife, and Liesel, his sister, in a bombed-out apartment house. By a freak, a small basement corner of the house had remained undamaged, surrounded by twisted girders and a mountain of debris. At first there had been only two rooms without water, light, or sewage. By burrowing into the rubble and removing it bit by bit, bricks, decayed bodies, and all, they had created four comfortable rooms. The city had not found out about their increase in living space, and the underground was using it as a refuge for its visitors.

Erik, Kay, and Liesel gave me a reception as only earnest young Germans could do. For three weeks they had lived for the moment that "the American" would arrive. I was their first personal contact with the West since the departure of the Americans from Leipzig in July 1945, and they had prepared a whole notebook full of questions they wanted to ask me.

All were avid listeners to the Voice of America, the broadcasts of the State Department, and the

British Broadcasting Corporation, and they had penciled down questions every time they had tuned in. Erik had cut out numerous clippings on America from the Communist press. After having been to the play *Deep Are the Roots*, by James Gow and Arnaud d'Usseau (which, incidentally, the Russians translated and produced under protest from the authors), Kay and Liesel had written down a series of questions on race relations.

There were simple questions about day-to-day life in the United States, such as: did Americans chew gum even at dinner?; was it safe for people to leave their house doors unlocked? Then there were weighty questions, such as: could America offer Europe merely its industrial and cultural mass production or new spiritual values? All this was piled up before me within a few minutes of my arrival.

I told them it would be better if I had some sleep first. But when I saw how disappointed they were, I changed my mind. From the food packages that were waiting for me I made some strong coffee. The sight of seeing me gulp down three or four cups at a time was too much for them. It seemed like drinking gold, and although I made them a present of the remaining coffee, they brewed only the thinnest of beverages for themselves, which they sipped with an expression of bliss.

Karl joined us after a while, and very soon we were deep in discussion. Like other Germans of

good will they were impressed by American foreign policy. At the same time they were utterly perplexed by the apparent contradiction between the Marshall Plan on the one hand and their conception of American life at home on the other.

"It just doesn't square up," Kay said. "For generations we've been taught to regard the United States as a country where to 'make money' was the philosophy of life, where self-interest in its crudest form was the motive power of existence. We were told that American intervention in World War I had been due solely to commercial greed. Now that we see American food, tractors, medical supplies, and raw materials pour into our devastated continent we are told that this is coming over as a gift, that behind it stands no more than the desire to help us."

She shook her head and went on: "Maybe we've become too cynical, and maybe we're more influenced by Russian propaganda than we realize. But we do find it difficult to accept the American claim of disinterestedness at its face value. Of course we hear the American broadcasting stations tell us that Americans consider prosperity in a free world as the best safeguard for peace. But the contrast between our picture of the American way of life and the alleged loftiness of purpose of the Marshall Plan is too great."

I said there was no contrast at all and that their doubts arose from that strangely exaggerated conception of American life common to many Euro-

peans. There was no contrast between the Marshall Plan and the American way of life, because Americans were generous at home too. In no other country had I found people taking such simple pleasure in the art of giving, of being neighborly and hospitable. To me that discovery had been the greatest surprise America had been able to offer. But, of course, there was an element of egotism even in magnanimity; in the Marshall Plan, because Americans hoped that it might save them another war; and in their domestic virtues, because they made life so much easier.

They considered the point, and after more questions rather in the vein of Mrs. Trollope, they accepted my thesis. Then Karl said: "The Americans can afford it. It's easy to be open-handed when you're rich." I said that I thought it was not a matter of money burning in people's pockets, but an attitude that often involved self-sacrifice and discomfort. Having said that, I found myself facing the barrier that bedevils the thinking of most Europeans. It is the notion that in a "rich country" every single citizen must be rich. However, I could agree with Erik when he said: "If it does nothing else, that notion at least proves how abysmally Communist propaganda has failed. For years they've been telling us about the American worker being exploited. And here you come and have to shake our belief that they are all paragons of wealth."

In the morning I was treated to breakfast in

bed, which my hosts thought was "*echt Amerikanisch*." But although Liesel had added a daring touch of flippancy to her face by using lipstick, treasured survival of the American occupation of three years ago, I did not enjoy the breakfast. On my arrival the previous night I had noticed in the basement the smell of ruin so familiar to all German cities. During the night it had rained heavily, and now there was a nauseating stench of scorched wood, charred paper, wet brick and cement dust, wet rusting iron, and rotting organic matter.

Erik said they no longer noticed it, but I could not grow used to the smell as long as I stayed there. I had to hold my breath every time I went down the steps, and especially after Liesel, with the best of intentions, had sprinkled perfume against the walls and over the furniture.

After breakfast I accompanied Karl on his way to the office. He told me something about his work in the field of industrial reorganization, and I was surprised when he spoke highly of two Russian subordinates of his. I said that it seemed extraordinary that a Russian should take orders from a German. Karl said: "The way they look at it is that all German officials act under Soviet orders; therefore, a Russian obeying a German order really obeys a higher Soviet authority." But it had not always been so. And he told me of an experience that he said was typical of the relations as they existed between German and Soviet offi-



cial's two years previous. "The Russians had given us permission to reopen an important factory near Leipzig, but some key machines were still missing. They had to be procured from Halle, and I had a written permit from General Markarov instructing the small Russian official in the Halle factory to hand the machines over to me. When we arrived in Halle with a fleet of trucks, the official looked at the permits from all sides.

"*'I nix give you machines,'* he declared firmly.

"*'But the general tells you to,'* we remonstrated.

"*'I nix care general,'* he said. Then, tearing the permit into shreds and scattering it around, he threw out his chest and said: *'I general too; all Russians are generals over Germans,'* and we had to go back to Leipzig. In the end we only received those machines after a Russian officer had come along with us."

I stayed in Leipzig for several days. Less than a hundred miles to the north the drama of the siege of Berlin was being played to the tense galleries of the world. While the Berliners were getting angry to the point of violent demonstrations, the Leipzigers had no such means of showing their feelings. But angry they were, with a collective exasperation that was depressing to watch.

Outside the newspaper offices, the kiosks, the buildings of the SED, they stood in mute gatherings reading the newspapers. When they had finished with the flimflam of Communist phraseol-

ogy, the garbled news, the mendacious editorials, their weary faces showed as much as words could tell. But physiognomy being as yet no ground for arrest in the Soviet zone, the wretched secret policemen stood by, powerless.

At the House of Soviet Culture a "sinner and saint" exhibition had attracted a small crowd. Photographs compared life in America and Russia in sharp and crude contrast. The American pictures were mainly concerned with showing police attacks on striking workers, Negroes being lynched, and surplus food being destroyed. There were atrocity pictures from Greece showing mutilated corpses. In large letters stood out the words: "This Is America," followed by a short but graphic account.

The U.S.A. is becoming more and more a police state. An inhuman witch hunt is being carried out against all progressive elements, and they are persecuted without mercy. A terroristic legislation, the Taft-Hartley Law, has suppressed what little rights the workers had, and given the capitalists the right to suppress every single attempt of the workers to defend their elementary rights. In the South the Negro population is returning to the slavery of pre-Lincoln days.

Abroad, American policy is one of expansion and bloody oppression. In Greece, American generals and diplomats organize and lead

the expeditions of the monarcho-Fascist gangsters against the Greek people. Thousands of Greek patriots fighting for freedom and independence have been bestially executed by the Americans. An American journalist who dared to speak the truth has been murdered by his own government. Greece is worse off today than under the Hitlerite occupation.

In other parts of the world the apostles of terror-democracy have shown their true colors. Americans are increasingly hated in every country where the masses are given a taste of their methods of terroristic democracy. That is the case, not only in Berlin, but in Germany everywhere.

I watched the expressions of people reading this, and there was no mistaking the angry sneers provoked by the words "in Germany everywhere."

In the packed streetcar somebody in front of me handed a newspaper to his companion. "Read that about Berlin," he said. The man read it, returned the paper, and the two looked at each other without saying a word. In restaurants, offices, waiting rooms, and hospitals I noticed the same unnatural silence of people over a crisis that was foremost in everybody's thoughts.

When the American forces had entered cosmopolitan Leipzig in April 1945, they had received a welcome as nowhere else in Germany. "There

is a liberating atmosphere here tonight," a British correspondent had reported; "almost the entire population are out in the streets or standing at windows, waving and shouting their delight at our arrival."

Their delight had proved premature. On July 3 the city had been handed over to the Soviets. Fortunately, the Soviet High Command had succeeded in re-establishing a measure of discipline in its army, and Leipzig had been spared the worst of the frenzy of rape and plunder that had marked the arrival of Soviet troops only a few miles to the east.

With the reopening of the 450-year-old fair in 1946—and subsequent efforts to turn the city into the Potemkin village of Soviet-occupied Germany—Leipzig became the only place in the zone where foreign visitors were welcome. Attractive restaurants, plentiful food, unlimited amounts of liquor, charming prostitutes, and excellent entertainment were provided to attract buyers. As the visitors were mostly billeted in private families, the population was permitted higher rations and greater political freedom than anywhere else behind the Iron Curtain.

A privileged position was also granted to Leipzig University. All other schools of the Soviet zone had long been made to toe the line of relentless party loyalty. Yet Leipzig University had retained an uneasy freedom, until the consequences had become so absurdly tragicomic that

the shroud of totalitarian discipline produced a welcome relief. I talked at length with one of the professors who recounted the recent history of the university as a curious experiment by the Russians in what he called Freedom Limited.

His story had its beginning in February 1947. The Russians had decided that it would be good politics to permit the university to elect its own Students' Council, a students' parliament with autonomous functions. The result was regarded as a foregone conclusion, since some sixty per cent of the undergraduates were studying with the aid of scholarships from the SED, the unions, and other Communist-controlled bodies. As a consequence the elections were scrupulously fair.

Their outcome was a political sensation. The SED did in fact emerge as the strongest single party. But its opponents, the Liberal Democratic Party and the Christian Democratic Union, together had a large majority. Elsewhere in the Soviet zone the LDP and CDU were mere front organizations for the Communists. But at Leipzig University they had been allowed to maintain their independence and their non-Communist leaders. Their victory, therefore, was of more than local significance.

The newly constituted Students' Council elected as its president a student by the name of Natonek, a member of the LDP. For over a year—as long as the Soviets maintained the privileged status of Leipzig—Natonek remained the center of politi-

cal controversy in Eastern Germany. The first clash came over a Communist demand that the number of Workers' Students should be increased at the expense of the bourgeois students. Workers' Students required no high-school education and no matriculation certificate. All they had to prove was a pure proletarian origin. Their fathers had to be manual workers—and of course members of the SED. There was strong opposition to the SED proposal at a stormy meeting of the Students' Council. The Communists pressed their demand on the grounds that each section of the population was entitled to be represented at the universities according to its relative numerical strength. Whereupon an LPD member, the student Plaetszch, rose and declared: "In that case, why not grant representation to the five per cent of imbeciles in our population?"

The SED promptly broke up the meeting in an uproar of indignation, walked out of the Council, and that very night sent a deputation to the Communist State Government in Dresden demanding action against Plaetszch and Natonek—against the latter because he had remained in the chair while Plaetszch's outrage was being committed.

Next day the Communist-controlled press quaked with indignation at this insult to the honor of the working class. But the storm in the Soviet teacup died as suddenly as it had arisen. For Marshal Sokolovsky sent word that Leipzig Uni-

versity was to retain its privileged position at a time when the Soviet authorities were making the greatest effort to attract foreign visitors to the fair.

Natonek, who, following the uproar over Plaetsch's one sentence, had taken a strong stand against the Workers' Students, had now become the "Enemy Number One of the working class." When the SED distributed some violently defamatory leaflets against Natonek, and the Leipzig printing presses refused to print his reply, Natonek, like Luther, pinned a declaration on the doors of the university. There was a riot, and this time the Soviet Military Administration intervened directly. Day after day Natonek was interrogated by high Soviet officers, threatened one day and cajoled the next. But he was not arrested.

In the end the Soviet authorities ordered the Students' Council to be disbanded, and new elections took place. For the second time the elections brought a surprise. Natonek's party, the LDP, received ten seats, the CDU nine, and the Communist SED, previously the strongest single group, eight seats.

The first action of the Council was to re-elect Natonek. He accepted, subject to his election being confirmed by the Soviet Military Administration. Again the unexpected happened, for Natonek's confirmation came through at once. For several more months the Russians tried to make Freedom Limited work in Leipzig. Curiously

enough, they did not stop the agitation of the SED against the Students' Council. But for a time they disregarded the clamor of the Communists and took no action against Natonek or other student leaders opposing the proletarianization of the university. I asked one student who had attended a number of conferences with the Russians why he thought they had changed their policy in the end.

He said: "The whole affair was an extraordinary revelation of how the mind of these Soviet officers works. I remember one meeting at which the presiding officer, a colonel, beseeched us almost tearfully to show some gratitude for the magnanimity of the Russians. 'We do not want to purge the Students' Council,' he said, 'but having treated you well, we expect you to give us a *quid pro quo*. We have given you more freedom than any other university, and the least we can expect is that you come to terms with the SED.' In other words, they tolerated a measure of liberty in the anticipation that we would surrender voluntarily what they could have taken by force. It was as if a highway robber, having left his victim with his purse, would request it as a reward for having been so civil. In the end the Russians grew thoroughly indignant. They told us we had confirmed their view that liberty tends to be abused and that only dictatorial discipline achieves results." He laughed grimly and went on: "It was an Alice-in-Wonderland lesson all



right, and I think everybody was relieved when the Russians finally clamped the lid on the university and ended the farce."

Elsewhere in Leipzig the days of localized limited freedom were also fast drawing to a close. There was just one last flicker of light when, on July 21, 1948, the city council, by a vote of forty-one to forty, refused to condemn the Marshall Plan. The mass arrests and the deportations were in full swing. And to the growth of hunger and shortages had come the foreboding sight of trainloads of heavy tanks that I saw rolling westward through Leipzig station.

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## CHAPTER VI

### RUSSIANS AND GERMANS



AFTER ONE WEEK in the Soviet zone of occupation I had come to regard myself as quite a successful impersonator of a German citizen under Russian rule. In Leipzig my identity papers had been checked only twice—once by a uniformed policeman and once by an attractive plain-clothes policewoman whose spicy perfume clung to my papers with a persistence worthy of a better cause. I was particularly pleased that I had had no trouble with my German. It had come back to me naturally, and I talked to strangers as freely as their fear-ridden caution allowed them to talk.

Thus, when I started a streetcar conversation with an elderly man whose tattered army uniform revealed him as a prisoner of war who had just returned from the Soviet Union, I felt safe enough to quiz him about Russia, although other people were listening to us. He was cautious in his replies, but claimed that conditions in the Soviet zone of Germany were much better than life in Russia. As we talked I became uncomfortably

aware of a thin-faced man staring at me. It was a cold, speculative gaze, and all of a sudden I was convinced that my German was giving me away—it seemed to sound artificial, Americanized, and I began to stutter.

The stare continued to bore into me. I tried to say no more, but the prisoner of war had warmed up and was asking me questions in turn. My accent seemed to become worse and worse. Leaving the streetcar would have been the simplest solution, but I remembered the coaching I had been given by my underground friends. "If you find you've aroused suspicion, try to allay it as long as there's the barest hope. Making your exit will only precipitate a crisis, unless you're desperate and it's your last way out."

We also had discussed what to do if anything in my speech should betray the foreigner. "You must curse then," Karl had said; "get yourself a vocabulary of the most profane, foul, low-down, slangy words you can think of and let 'em rip. Make sure you choose words that aren't even found in any dictionary, and it's a safe bet you'll kill anybody's suspicion, even though they won't think you're a gentleman."

There was no need for me to look for a pretext. Since that night in the bombed house in Jena I had been plagued by sudden spasms of sciatica. I gave one last look at the thin-faced man, and when I saw no change of expression on his face I let go.

Two women looked shocked and indignant, a boy laughed out loud, and the prisoner of war said: "Well, that's worse than the army." The man with the stare seemed to have lost interest in me. I said something about sciatica and bad pains. At the next stop I got off without being followed by anybody.

Later, when I told Erik about this, he was sympathetic. "Probably that fellow was just day-dreaming," he said, "but you never know. That's the worst about living underground, especially if it's for a short time and you haven't grown used to it. You are bound to react strongly to anything that's unusual, until you begin to discover that the unusual becomes chronic."

I went for a stroll through the streets of Leipzig, and I was struck again by the predominance of women—there are fourteen women to ten men in the Soviet zone. I saw them in police uniforms, as streetcar drivers and garbage collectors, grubbing in the debris, sorting out bricks and cleaning them carefully, piece by piece.

Most of the bricks were being carted away in little handcarts, with one woman pushing and another pulling. But in one area I found whole families loading bricks on oxcarts and horse-drawn vehicles. They did not look like city dwellers at all, and I asked a boy where they came from. They turned out to be refugees from East Prussia who had been settled on an estate that had recently been broken up.

I asked what they were doing with these bricks, and a boy said they were building a house. "And where do you live now?" I asked.

"In a stable," was his reply.

The next day I saw some of the conditions in which many of these settlers live. Any German Communist will tell you about the great achievements of the land reform—that 7,500,000 acres of land expropriated from 8,400 owners—including 1,600 Nazi criminals—have been distributed among 500,000 farmers. These are impressive figures, but behind them lie the dismal realities of farms that are much too small, of families living in stables and mud huts, of no machinery, no tools, no fertilizer.

The big estates, efficient and scientifically run grain or sugar factories, have given way to uneconomical small units. Their historical castles and great manor houses are being pulled down—"to do away with these seats of the militaristic spirit." Throughout Eastern Germany the traveler sees these desolate mountains of brick, stone, and timber—as if the ruin of great and beautiful cities had not brought enough destruction of cultural values.

In Saxony alone, 1,800 buildings, many dating back three hundred years, have been destroyed or are in the process of being wrecked. As one settler said, "We used the library and the antique furniture as firewood. But why pull down the building? It sheltered seventeen families, and now

we've got to live in these drafty huts knocked together from the oak paneling of the old manor house."

In the evening Karl asked four friends to meet me in Erik's place. At first I shied at so many strangers' knowing of my identity. Karl reassured me, however, that each one was an experienced underground worker, although they were all holding positions in close contact with the Russians.

As we talked through the night and I heard them express the conviction that there was no possibility of peace as long as the Russians remained in Europe, I found it difficult to understand how they had ever come to join up with the Soviets. A white-haired trade-unionist offered to explain.

"When we took office," he said, "we were members of the Social Democratic Party. We had to accept the fact of the Russian occupation. We also accepted the dismantling of factories, reparations out of current production, and the lowering of our standard of living that this entailed. We knew it would be a terrible burden to bear, but then—that was the heritage Hitler's aggressions and loss of the war had left us. But we also had our hopes. Unlike the Americans and the British, the Soviets from the first relied on the co-operation of us Germans. They vacillated between two extremes, and we thought we had enough influence to make them go in our direction. On the one hand, they wanted to get as much out of Germany as possible

—factories, railways, specialists, current production, foodstuffs, even art treasures, paintings, libraries—everything. On the other hand, they wanted to win our allegiance long before America and England had freed themselves of the Morgenthau mentality.”

“You see,” Gregor, a lawyer, broke in, “we believed that the land reform and the nationalization of industry would help to democratize Germany. In general, we hoped that by becoming part of a great economic and political unit stretching from the Elbe to Vladivostok, Germany would have a chance of survival such as the West could never offer us.”

I asked them why they had been disappointed.

They laughed scornfully, and one of them said: “You’ve seen these gray-faced men, women, and children. They’re hungry and afraid, and all they can see in the future is another war, with themselves either dead or in Siberia. Isn’t that an answer in itself?”

Erik chewed on his long Russian cigarette and explained: “Another assumption we had made was that the Russians, since it was their aim to win over the Germans in the West, would retain a measure of political freedom in their own zone. In this we were completely wrong. The Russian idea of winning over the Germans was to create chaos in Western Germany. Only it didn’t work out their way, and now the recovery of the Bizone

has made them realize how far they've fallen behind in this fantastic competition."

"Yes," Karl said, "and that's been the signal for putting the heat on us, with their secret police, concentration camps, and deportations. There are over fifty thousand people in concentration camps now, and many more have disappeared without trace."

"And you don't think the Russians could still regain the ground they've lost here?" I asked.

A university professor who had been sitting silently in a corner now spoke. "They could, of course, try to retrieve the situation by changing their policy as drastically as the Americans have changed theirs from Morgenthau to Marshall. If the Russians were to cease dismantling our factories, send us some raw materials, feed their army with supplies from Russia, and relax their political grip, then the picture would be a different one. But of course that isn't feasible," he said.

"Why not?" I asked. "Wouldn't the prize of Germany be worth it?"

"Theoretically, yes," said Karl, "but in practice the Russians can't do it. I had a talk the other day with a Russian general. I asked him why the Russians didn't simply take the wind out of the sails of ERP by giving us a Molotov Plan of recovery. You should have seen him flush with anger.

"'Damn it!' he shouted. 'Can't you see? We came to this country as conquerors. We gave you,



the defeated people, a standard of living twice as high as that of our own people. Do you know what our soldiers say when they return to their homes? They say the Germans are getting more food, more clothes, better houses, better transport than the Russians get. And what have we got in return from you? Hatred, arrogance, sabotage, and, worst of all, contempt because of our poverty.' ”

“That’s right,” Erik went on; “the Russians are in a real dilemma there. And there’s another point. We think we’re oppressed beyond endurance, but the Russian in Leipzig who sees a German sentenced to five years for working against the Soviets may well wonder why this German should be treated so much more leniently than the citizen, say, of Moscow, who’d get twenty years for the same offense. The fact is that, according to his own standards, the Ivan has treated us as a privileged group. He cannot go much further without asking for more trouble among his occupation troops than he’s already having now.”

The white-haired man spoke again. “Of course the Russians have been at a disadvantage for psychological reasons as well. You see, no people likes to be conquered, but being conquered by somebody for whom you have respect makes it a lot easier. Thus, when the American Army marched in and the Germans saw the wonderful excellence of American equipment and transport, they

shrugged their shoulders and said: 'No wonder we couldn't stand up against that.'

"But in the Russian zone the Germans stared in astonishment as the victorious Soviet Army arrived. You should have seen its shaky wooden carts drawn by half-starved horses, the odds and ends of conveyances picked up on the way, the ragged uniforms, the soldiers with their feet tied up in rags, and their lack of discipline.

"Whatever decent transport they had was either American or captured from the Germans. At that moment there was only one thought in millions of German minds: 'And those are our conquerors?' Then, when they saw more of the Russians, their illiteracy and their ignorance of such ordinary Western prerequisites as a water toilet—mind you, they used to wash their faces in them—the Germans had made up their minds. Even if the Russians had achieved wonders, the Germans would have hated them, although they might have joined them against the West if they had seen a future in that."

"So what do you think?" I asked. "Is there any way out for the Russians in their German dilemma?"

Erik answered: "Don't run away with the impression that they have given up their efforts to win us over. They'll certainly make use of every conceivable political trick—such as their present alliance with the old nationalistic and Fascist element in Germany. Even so, we all think it's too

late now. If we had a free election, the SED wouldn't get ten per cent of the votes. The truth is that as far as relatively peaceful methods are concerned, the Soviets are at the end of their tether, and that's why the danger of war is now so immeasurably greater than before."

The doorbell rang. The men looked at one another, and Karl asked whether Erik was expecting anybody.

"No," said Erik. "Karl, you and Knop and Gregor leave through the tunnel—just in case."

We scurried through the back entrance, which led into a short passage under the rubble, and hid among the stacked-up bricks.

After a few minutes Karl left to reconnoiter. When he returned, he said it had only been a black-market vendor bringing the *Telegraf* and *Tagesspiegel*.

The two papers were a Social Democratic and an American newspaper from Berlin. They were both banned in the Soviet zone, and obtainable only in the black market.

"Wonderful commentary on our civilization," the professor remarked when we were all together again, "that the two most expensive things in the black market should be the Western-licensed newspapers and poison!"

"Poison?" I asked.

"Yes," was the reply. "It's going to Berlin. People are buying it in case the Russians take over."

## CHAPTER VII

### WHO IS AFRAID OF THE LITTLE NAZI?



AT BREAKFAST I noticed, the same as during previous meals, that there seemed to be no great shortage of food in Erik's home. I asked about this, and Erik's wife explained, a little shamefacedly, that as a government official and member of the Socialist Unity Party Erik was entitled to extra rations.

The "normal consumer" in the Soviet zone receives a ration of: bread, eighteen pounds per month; potatoes, twelve pounds; and sugar, one pound, five ounces. Theoretically he is also entitled to one pound of meat and ten ounces of fat, but this ration is rarely honored. If he is lucky, he is allotted some sugar and cheese instead. Then there is a small ration of prepared cereals such as macaroni, and two pounds of jam made largely of sugar beets and other roots. Milk, eggs, and fish are issued irregularly, and then only to limited groups of consumers. With an average of 1,250 calories a day, as against some 2,200 in the Bizone,

the Russian zone of Germany is the worst-fed part of Europe today.

Being so scarce, food has become a first-rate means of rewarding political services. The highest extra rations go to the sixteen leaders of the SED, including Pieck and Grotewohl and the two hundred-odd ministers and top officials of the Central Administration and the five state governments. Their extra rations amount to twelve pounds of meat, six pounds of butter, five hundred cigarettes, sixteen pounds of sugar, thirty eggs, and forty pounds of vegetables a month. The other officials are divided into five groups, and their rations vary accordingly.

I asked Erik's wife about their rations, and she explained: "We belong to Category Three. We're given an extra six pounds of flour, two pounds of meat, twenty pounds of potatoes, a hundred and fifty cigarettes, and three pounds of sugar per person a month. In addition, we occasionally get a special milk and egg supply."

I inquired whether that did not cause a lot of ill feeling in the country.

"Sure it does," she said. "You know, we've had many food riots recently. I happened to be near Zertz the other day. Police there loosed dogs at people stealing potatoes from the fields, and afterward an angry crowd smashed up the home of a local SED official. A woman was brought before the People's Judge, and he asked her whether she thought that stealing potatoes would improve our

difficult supply position. When she asked back whether he would say how many extra rations he was drawing, there was such demonstrative applause from the public that the court had to be cleared. The woman was sent to Sachsenhausen concentration camp."

I was given a postscript to this conversation when I picked up a piece of paper from a street-car floor. One look and it vanished into my pocket. It turned out to be an anti-Soviet leaflet containing an angry attack on the use of vitally needed potatoes for the distilling of liquor. On one side the leaflet showed a bloated and beringed individual—prototype of the small Communist official—gulping down a glass of liquor. It bore the words: "From our potatoes!"

On the other side it explained why millions of families in the Soviet zone had to go without potatoes for months, and why farmers had no seed potatoes. Over half a million tons of potatoes were being distilled annually into *Schnaps*. So much *Schnaps* was being consumed in the Soviet zone that the liquor tax alone was producing as much revenue as the income tax, wage tax, and sales tax together. The leaflet was signed by the underground organization of the Social Democratic Party of Saxony. It was the first that came my way in Leipzig and Dresden of several other leaflets of the underground defying the Soviet power. Well written, well printed and cleverly illustrated, they were distributed by a brave band of

men and women working in the shadow of death and deportation.

Later, a friend—a publisher—took me around to some bookshops. Once the center of the world's book trade, Leipzig still has the finest selection of secondhand books a bibliophile could hope to find in present-day Germany. It was a successful expedition, and the books I bought were later sent by mail to Western Germany, where they arrived safely. As we were close to the firm of Justus Perthes, famous cartographical publishers, I tried to buy the latest edition of their atlas of the world.

The clerk was very sorry; he could not sell me the complete atlas, only an abridged edition. This one did not have the separate maps of Turkey, Iran, the Arabic states, Asiatic Russia, Manchuria, Korea, Sinkiang, Mongolia, and Burma. All these countries were represented merely on the continental maps.

"But why is this?" I asked, and was told that they were out of print.

When we were outside, my companion said: "I remember now. A few months ago a commission of Soviet specialists inspected the stocks of all wholesale bookstores and map publishers. I know they confiscated many and even took the plates along with them."

In the evening Erik asked if I would like to cycle to the Leuna Works, near Merseburg. They had a friend there, a member of the works police, who was about to flee into the American zone,

and they wanted me to have a talk with him. "You can make it in two or three hours comfortably," Erik said, "and Hannes—the one who didn't talk last night—will go along with you."

I met Hannes the next morning, holding a couple of bicycles. He also had a new set of identity papers for me. "We thought it better to change you into a resident of Leipzig," he said, and I had to spend the next half hour trying to memorize the various data of my new identity.

The road to Leuna was crowded with traffic. We were in the area of the greatest concentration of chemical industries in Germany. Some twenty miles northwest was Buna, producer of synthetic rubber. To the west lay Leuna, once the heart of the I. G. Farben chemical empire. And fifteen miles to the south was Espenheim, the greatest producer of synthetic gasoline in Germany. Judging by the thousands of men and women cycling to their work, the numerous trucks, most of them with trailers, and all heavily laden, the economic pulse of this region was going strong.

For the first time, too, there was evidence of large Soviet army movements. Most of the men were on trucks, but at one point we overtook some two thousand on the march, a column of shabby blouses, clumsy forage caps, and enormous automatic guns that reached from the men's necks to below their knees. They had fine, lusty voices, but their song rang strange and harsh. I watched the Germans cycling by, and scarcely one of them



looked at the marching column. The troops, who were almost all Mongolians, looked in good shape.

Coming closer to Leuna reminded me of seeing the skyscrapers of Manhattan rise out of the early-morning mist. Two or three gigantic smokestacks slowly took on shape, then another two, and finally all sixteen, a cloud of smoke hovering over them. I was astonished, and said to Hannes: "I thought Leuna was bombed and dismantled?"

"Yes," he said, "the Americans and the British bombed Leuna twenty-two times, and ten thousand bombs fell on it. Later the Ivan employed tens of thousands of Germans to dismantle it. Yet Leuna still lives."

Behind a road bend the whole of Leuna suddenly came into view—three to four miles of buildings and fantastic-looking structures entwined with a multitude of pipe lines. Here and there lay rusty piles of scrap. Only eight of the stacks seemed to be working, but the huge combine had the unmistakable air of bustling activity.

We met Herr Koscik at one of the gates. With his powerful frame he looked the policeman all over. He asked us to come to an empty office building where we could talk in peace. "If anybody inquires, I'll say you're from the SED in Leipzig," he suggested.

A banner stretching for hundreds of feet demanded freedom and peace for the Western Germans now enslaved by American imperialists. The

gate was guarded by German policemen with carbines and several sloppy Mongolian soldiers, but Herr Koscik easily obtained passage for us.

He told me he was inspector of the works police although a chemical engineer by training. Recently the police had been given a new head, a former major in Göring's *Luftwaffe*—fresh from Russia, and a Nazi through and through. Men were being arrested on the slightest suspicion of anti-Communist views. He was not going to be a partner in this and had decided to escape into the American zone. Could I help him with one or two introductions? I gave him what help and advice I could.

One section of Leuna bore all the signs of recent reconstruction, and I asked Koscik what it meant. He explained that it was a new plant for the production of plastics. It had originally been built for the German Army, and the Russians had recently transferred it from Mollwitz in Thuringia to Leuna—a first-rate engineering achievement.

When Koscik noticed that I was interested, he walked part of the way with us. "What puzzles me," I said, "is this mixture of dismantling and reconstruction in the Soviet zone. Is there any sense in it?"

"Until now it has only meant a tremendous waste of manpower and productive capacity," Koscik replied. "Here in Leuna the Russians have been dismantling for more than two years, and at one time, in 1946, they had as many as forty

thousand men and women on the job. If they needed more workers, they simply conscripted a few thousand in Halle or Merseburg. Naturally these people were completely unskilled. Thus the Russians got a load of scrap and relatively little of value for their own chemical industries. There's no doubt that it would have paid them to leave this plant in Leuna and let it work for them here."

"On the other hand," Hannes broke in, "if there's war, it's better to have thirty per cent of Leuna working in the safety of the Ural Mountains than to have a hundred-per-cent capacity in such a highly vulnerable spot as Merseburg."

"True," Koscik said. "Yet this strategic hazard hasn't stopped the Russians from producing heavy water here, which, as you know, is used in the development of the atomic bomb. Moreover, they employ thousands of people on extending our synthetic gasoline and fertilizer plants. I think they have discovered the costliness of transferring factories to Russia. They also know that if they are to regain popular support in this zone, they must increase production and give us more than the fifteen-per-cent share we are getting now."

I asked Koscik whether he believed the Russians were still hoping to win over the Germans.

"Certainly," he said. "They know that the fight for Germany will decide the fight for Europe. They'll try every artifice to win us over—at least enough of us to help to oppress the others. You can see that by the way they are trying to attract

the former Nazis. And there comes one of them. Watch out!"

The officer who was walking toward us was such a perfect replica of an SS man that he took my breath away. His smartly cut black uniform, brightly polished top boots, the revolver dangling from his hip, and all the pomp and circumstance of silver lace were in perfect harmony with the cold arrogance of his face. Koscik saluted him, and the officer walked past.

"Good heavens!" I said; "I never thought I would see that uniform again in Germany."

Hannes and Koscik laughed, and Hannes said: "That's nothing. Wait till you've seen some of our new police formations."

During the next few days in Leipzig, and later in Dresden and other cities of the Eastern zone, I found that they were right. The Russians are appealing increasingly to the pathological fringe of German nationalism—the embittered former Nazis, the jobless high officers of Hitler's armed forces, the same unprincipled but efficient mercenaries who started to undermine the democratic republic of Weimar twenty-five years ago.

Nor is this entirely a new development. It goes back to the establishment of the National Committee for Free Germany in Moscow in July 1943—an organization composed of German soldiers and officers taken prisoner in Russia and headed by Field Marshal von Paulus and General von Seydlitz.

The National Committee carried out valuable psychological warfare for the Russians, but little was heard of it after the German collapse. A few of the leaders appeared in important posts in Russian-occupied Germany. Among them were Colonel Steidle, who entered the Central Administration; Major Bechler, who became Minister of the Interior in Brandenburg; Major Seitz, now mayor of Schwerin; and the best-known of all, Captain Markgraf, who had been decorated with the Knight's Cross by Hitler, and who, as the Soviet-appointed police president of Berlin, has proved himself a willing tool in Russian hands.

Beyond vague rumors that a German army was training in Russia, little was heard of the National Committee. It was clear that the Russians were proceeding with extreme caution and that the committee was being kept in the background for a reason. Then, on February 27, 1948, a significant event occurred with the proclamation of Order No. 35 by Marshal Sokolovsky. He ordered the end of denazification in the Russian zone, declared that the zone had been cleared of active Fascists and militarists, and extended the hand of reconciliation to former Nazi Party members, who, he said, could regain their former public positions and business posts through honest, loyal work.

It soon became apparent that this was the opening move for a carefully planned campaign to attract the allegiance of former Nazis. The Mos-

cow-controlled press of Germany suddenly discovered that thousands of former Nazi Party members had joined Hitler only because they had wanted to save the Fatherland. It was wrong, so the new propaganda refrain went, to penalize these men for the madness of a few leaders.

A few weeks later, on March 22, those Berliners who bought the first issue of the new Soviet-sponsored *National Zeitung* rubbed their eyes in astonishment. The pen of Doctor Goebbels seemed strangely alive. There was the same old talk of "foreign plutocrats wanting to ruin Germany," of "traitors to the German cause" acting as "agents of international capitalism." An editorial headed WHO IS AFRAID OF THE LITTLE NAZI? spoke of the Little Nazi's anticapitalist yearning and how it was time to make up for the injustices he had suffered. The familiar catchwords of the classical Nazi jargon were all there.

The *National Zeitung* continued its efforts to rally the Nazis behind the Moscow banner. But that alone was not enough. On June 16, Colonel Tulpanov, Chief of the Soviet Information Division, announced the formation of two new parties—one of them the National Democratic Party, the party of the Little Nazi.

In the meantime, since the proclamation of Order No. 35, thousands of Nazis have been released from internment and concentration camps. In many cases their return home has been made the occasion of a little celebration, the local Com-

munist boss welcoming them with the present of a new suit and a "Stalin food parcel" as proof that all is forgiven and forgotten.

The former Nazis have once more an organization of their own. The old faces, the old songs are there again. What does it matter that agents of the MVD are present at all the meetings? Much more important is the news from the East. Members of the National Committee are arriving from Moscow, Kiev, the Crimea. They come unobtrusively and are quietly filling the higher administrative jobs in the Interior Department, the railroads, and the police—especially the police.

And they bring news for the old soldiers and Nazis. Near Kaliningrad—the former German Königsberg—a German militia is training, 100,000 strong. Other, smaller units are being formed in the Crimea and on the shores of Lake Baikal. How true that is, nobody can check. But the fact remains that pilots of jet-propelled aircraft, men who have had experience with heavy tanks and guided missiles, and other specialists of the former Wehrmacht are being registered with the police throughout the Soviet zone, and that one after another quietly disappears for an unknown destination. It is the old atmosphere of the Black Reichswehr, the Free Corps, and the early SA and SS all over again.

A little of this was noticeable even when I stood in Leipzig Central Station waiting for the VIP train to Dresden. Karl had supplied me with a

priority ticket for it, and as I stood among the people on the platform I noticed the complete absence of the gray and haggard tatterdemalions who normally crowd the Soviet-zone stations. Instead there were a number of Soviet officers, some well-fed German Communist officials, and, above all, an impressive and military array of high German police officers. By the way the Russians and the railwaymen stood around gazing at them, you could see that they were still a novel sight.

Whether the Russians are going to benefit from the mercenary services of the Nazis and ex-officers remains to be seen. At best their reliability must be doubtful, especially that of the professional soldiers. Many signed up in Russian captivity in the hope of speeding up their return to Germany. Perhaps they really believed that it was purely a matter of professional employment—just as their predecessors had signed up for the Chinese or Bolivian armies after the collapse of 1918. But since their return home and subsequent discovery of the kind of services expected from them, they are deserting in increasing numbers.

The Nazis, however, are in a different category. They have much more in common with Russian Communism than with Western democracy. They know that the best they can hope for in Western Germany is a life of oblivion; that they, who used to strut in the sun of parades and admired authority, would live in the shadows, eating the bitter bread of failure. The Russians, on the other



hand, can offer them power, uniforms—even the same old concentration camps.

And then, what Nazi does not admire Russian foreign policy today? While I was careful to avoid the Nazis in the Eastern zone, I had talked to many in the West. "The Russians know how to dish it out to the Americans and the British," they had said.

And they had compared the toughness, resourcefulness, and cleverness of Soviet policy with the softness and effiteness of the democracies—just as they had admired Ribbentrop's foreign policy before the war. For these men there is no place in Germany like Karlshorst.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Marshal Sokolovsky's headquarters.

## CHAPTER VIII

### SURPRISING COMPANY



ON THE TRAIN from Leipzig to Dresden I had to share a compartment with three Soviet officers who were in high spirits and had a way of punctuating their hilarity with massive slaps on my knees. At first they had paid no attention to me. But after our papers had been checked by a Russian MP and they had heard him read aloud from my travel orders that I was on the secretarial staff of the Saxony State Government, they offered me a cigarette and talked to me in German. A little later they produced a silver flask and a bottle of vodka, which they insisted on sharing. They formed an attractive trio who seemed to enjoy life to the hilt; three happy big boys who might have been young Americans from Minnesota.

It took me some time to discover what had made them so gay: they were going home to Moscow. I tried to get them to talk politics. Didn't they think they would be coming back soon if there was war? Yet I might have been talking about the theory of relativity. They merely roared:

"Drink, brother, for tomorrow we'll all be dead . . . but first we go to Moskva!" In the end, one of them let go a sentimental song, and the three melted into tears. I gave up then and enjoyed the vodka.

In Dresden they offered to take me home in the car that was waiting for them, and I accepted. I had arranged to stay with Walter, a scientist and a member of the trade-union underground to whom I had been introduced in Leipzig. He lived in a settlement of cottages, and when we drove along slowly, looking for the house number, I saw him working in his front garden. He looked around as the car stopped in front of the gate. If a bucket of whitewash had been poured over his head, he could not have looked whiter than he did at that moment.

The Russians shouted a noisy farewell and drove off. "Come in," said Walter, "and explain." I could see that he had difficulty controlling himself. Inside, I told him what had happened. He drew a long breath and sat down. "Of all the crazy things!" he said. "Here we're having a meeting of the trade-union opposition going on in the basement, and you drive up in a car of the secret police."

It was my turn to be aghast. "But they were uniformed," said I.

"Yes," said Walter, "the MVD also has uniformed officers, and the markings of the car were

those of the uniformed branch of the MVD." Then he laughed. "I bet you frightened the whole street as much as you did me."

I had been in Dresden before, seventeen years ago, when it had been the architectural pride of Germany. Coming back to it now, I looked in vain for the quiet streets with the delicate wrought-iron gateways leading to fine parks, the courtyards of palaces, and dreamy gardens. In the night of February 13, 1945, when American and British planes had dropped 2,500 high-explosive bombs and 600,000 incendiaries, the baroque beauty of Dresden had ceased to exist. I walked through the center of the old city, now a deserted vista of seven square miles of destruction. A ragged little girl sold me a guidebook to the few remaining historical buildings, and it said that of 117,000 people who had lived in this part of the town, only 900 are left today. I could well believe it.

On the last blank page of the guide book, a yellow page headed: "A Timely Appendix" had been inserted. It read:

At a time when the American and British air forces are hailing the Air Bridge to Berlin as a service to peace, their real face is shown by the desolation now reigning in Germany's cities. What has been done to our beautiful Dresden has been done a hundred times over

from Munich to Nuremberg and from Frankfurt to Lubeck. The cultural heritage of centuries has been destroyed, the lives of defenseless women and children have perished in fire and ashes; yet the war industries have been barely touched.

Dresden's churches, operas, and museums are gone; but Göring's air force barracks and Hitler's ammunition factories in the suburbs have passed through the war almost unharmed.

The Soviet Union has never believed in the bombing of civilian populations and objects of historical and cultural value. Throughout the war the great Soviet air fleets have concentrated their deadly power only on tactical bombing—the destruction of the Hitlerite armies. Remember that when you stand and gaze over the desert in the heart of Dresden and when you hear the word “humanity” used by the American air adventurers of Berlin.

Having witnessed the destruction by the Russians of Saxony's ancient castles and Renaissance palaces, I found it odd to read this emphatic defense of cultural values. And having reached Bruehl's Terrace, once the “balcony” of Europe's aristocrats, princes, and kings, and now turned into a stinking heap of rubble and garbage, I reflected

how times and conquerors had changed. Once before, in 1814, after the Russo-Prussian victories over Napoleon, had Dresden had a Russian military governor. Prince Repnin had liked the Terrace so much that he had enhanced it by a fine flight of steps leading to the small gardens on the old ramparts along the River Elbe. Now a different type of Russia was ruling in Dresden. The same men who had wiped out Repnin's class and descendants were busy obliterating Eastern Germany's architecture of a nobler past.

The Catholic Hofkirche, Chiaveri's masterly Italian renaissance church, rose among the debris, apparently undamaged. But when I came nearer, it was only a shell. I walked around it, guided by the faint sound of singing that came out of the ruins. There was a small door, and when I opened it I was in another world. A choir of curly-headed boys nearly filled the half-destroyed chapel, their voices rising clear and stirring in the solemn light of candles. An old verger said it was the famous boys' choir of the destroyed Kreuzkirche, and that the motets they were singing were by Orlando di Lasso. There was something deeply moving about the sight of these children in this city of contrasts.

Soviet-occupied Dresden was a city full of extremes. You left the desolate ruins, and in a few minutes you walked through the streets of a garden city with the elegant houses and sanatoriums of what used to be one of Europe's most luxurious

spas. There was not a sign of destruction. Well-dressed, chubby children in knee-high boots shouted: "*Nyanyushka!*" at fat Russian nurses with starched bonnets. Everything was Russian there—the street names, the motorcars, the plump women, and the strains of the balalaika coming out of an open window. A little Chinese in uniform whistled as he polished the hood of a glittering sedan with a Russian number plate.

I walked ten more minutes and came to the Meisenberg, another fashionable suburb. But unlike the Russian quarter, it was surrounded by barbed wire, with police in green-and-white sentry boxes guarding the entrances. A shabbily dressed passer-by and I were challenged to show our identity cards and were told this was a restricted zone and not a place for sight-seers. The "restricted zone," I discovered, was the residential reservation for the members of the Communist State Government of Saxony.

"Even the Nazis who used to live in these villas never surrounded themselves with barbed wire and police," the stranger said; and then he added: "I know, because I was one of them." However, I had not forgotten my experience with the secret agent in Harzgerode, and walked away with a grunt.

The calm and the beauty of this retreat of the powerful were undisturbed by a single political banner or placard. But the modern and almost undamaged part of Dresden, separated from the

dead center by the River Elbe, made up for this omission. There was a riot of banners, streamers, and posters: WE DEMAND THE WITHDRAWAL OF ALL OCCUPATION FORCES FROM GERMANY; AMERICA—THE ENSLAVEN OF EUROPE!; THE BERLIN AIR LIFT—A MEANS FOR THE REMOVAL OF LOOT.



## CHAPTER IX

### SLAV BACON



I HAD BEEN TOLD that going to Bautzen would prove a unique experience. Therefore when a friend of Karl's, a Czech doctor, was willing to give me a ride, I went along. It took us little more than an hour on the splendid *Autobahn* east of Dresden to reach the ancient city, the "capital of Sorbian Lusatia."

The first impression was one of dismay. Bautzen's magnificent medieval center, once known as the Sleeping Beauty of Lusatia, was a waste of rubble. Yet the town was teeming with extraordinary life and energy. Situated only a few miles from the Czech border in the south and the Polish occupation border in the east, Bautzen has become the advanced outpost of the Slav world in its move westward. Here the Slav flood tide, which in the last four years has washed over Eastern Germany up to the Oder-Neisse line, and over the Sudeten German lands of Bohemia up to the

old Reich border, is still surging against the Germanic shore and slowly washing it away.

Eight hundred years ago the tide was flowing in the opposite direction. The Germans were colonizing and Christianizing Eastern Europe. Somehow, Lusatia, the area around Bautzen inhabited by the Sorbian tribe, remained a Slav fastness. Through the centuries it retained its distinctive culture, customs, and language. While German was taught in the schools, Sorbian was spoken at home.

Since the end of the war Russians, Poles, and Czechs have been doing their utmost to revitalize Sorbian life. The Domovina, or Sorbian League, is supplied with ample funds from Warsaw and Prague. Street names in Bautzen are now in German, Russian, and Sorbian. There are Sorbian schools, libraries, theaters, and a Sorbian newspaper, *Nova Doba*, with a substantial circulation. Historical Sorbian buildings destroyed during the war are being re-erected, and the cultural life of the town is one of the most active in Germany.

We arrived in Bautzen in time to see a tremendous red banner being raised between two poles. To me the Sorbian legend on it looked like so many tongue twisters. The doctor said it meant: "The solidarity of the Slav peoples united under the banner of Stalin is the outstanding historical development of the first half of the twentieth century."

"I think that is true" my Czech companion said. "The Western world has not the slightest idea what a dynamic force is active behind this second eruption of our race into history. Our first debut, at the turn of the sixth century, was belated and humiliating. When we were driven out of our Pripet Marshes, the wheel of Hellenic civilization had gone its full circle, and we had remained barbarians, untouched by the greatest of ages. For thirteen hundred years the Slavs bided their time, and now that Western civilization has fallen from grace, they stand ready—no longer the unpractical sluggards who fell to the Avars and who had harps but no swords; now they come with a vitality, a natural force that has been physically disciplined and intellectually supercharged by Stalinism."

Throughout Bautzen the theme of Panslavism was repeated with missionary fervor. A group of Sorbian students was helping in the rebuilding of a library. Dressed only in the scrappiest of bathing trunks, and with their anointed brown bodies glistening in the sun, they accompanied their heavy work with Slav songs that were deep and rich. Young women in colorful costumes distributed handbills for a Domovina meeting at which there would be dancing and free refreshments.

"Those refreshments have a lot to do with the success of the Sorbian League" the doctor said.

"Once you've been able to prove that your grandmother—or some other forebear—had a Slav name, membership in the Domovina raises you automatically to membership in the master race. That means, among other things, higher rations, extra clothes, and better housing."

I asked how many Germans had joined the Domovina, and he said: "More than sixty thousand families." He went on: "You see it's always one step *du sublime au ridicule*; in this case, from Slav solidarity to Slav bacon and butter."

So far the Domovina, while supported and encouraged by the Russian occupation authorities, has not been permitted to form a Sorbian government. But its advocacy of an autonomous Sorbian state, stretching from Dresden to Görlitz, and from the Czech frontier to south of Berlin, is being pursued with singleness of purpose. Leaders of the Domovina are represented in the State Parliament of Saxony. As ardent Communists and disbursers of large funds, they fight with every advantage on their side. At the same time, German resistance has stiffened and the Domovina is beginning to find it harder to make converts.

On leaving Bautzen we lost our way in a side street, and I leaned out of the car and inquired the way from a man who sported a Domovina badge on his lapel. I addressed him in German, and he replied angrily in what I thought was Sorbian. My Czech companion then took over and

questioned the stranger, who grew very red in the face. Turning to me with a laugh, the doctor said: "I'll bet you anything that wretched German hasn't been a Sorb for more than a week. He doesn't understand a word of his new mother tongue."

## CHAPTER X

### LIGHT ON THE SOVIETS



BACK IN DRESDEN, a friend took me to the opening ceremony of a legal convention, attended by judges, lawyers, representatives of the government, and some sixty or seventy Russians in and out of uniform. After an address by a pompous Russian colonel, there was a reception at which *Schnaps*, vodka, and coffee were served. My friend grew excited all of a sudden.

"Do you see that general there? The fellow with the broad pale face and the dark hair?" he asked.

"Yes," said I. "Who is he?"

"Dekanozov" was the reply. "Colonel General Vladimir Dekanozov."

I remembered the name, and thought there had been an Ambassador Dekanozov in Berlin.

"Quite right," my friend said. "Dekanozov was Deputy People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs, and then Soviet Ambassador in Berlin from December 1940 to the time that Hitler and Stalin started to scrap over the spoils of the war."

I asked what he was doing here, and my friend took me into a corner. "Dekanozov is the Gray Eminence of Soviet policy in Germany," he said. "He's the fellow Clay and Marshall ought to talk to, not Sokolovsky. He's here in Dresden, with a group of high-ranking ex-members of the German General Staff and several former conservative leaders, discussing plans for a separate East-ern-zone government. As you know, the Russians are leaning more and more on the old Nazi element, and it's Dekanozov we have to thank for this. He's the man who won the Nazi generals over to the Soviet cause after Stalingrad."

We went into an adjacent room where there was an exhibition of Soviet cartoons. Almost every one was directed against the United States. "That's a good one," a powerfully built major said to me, pointing at a cartoon. It showed a villainous Mr. Marshall addressing a riffraff of generals: "Gentlemen, our civilization is in mortal danger. The Soviets are threatening us with peace."

"Ha, ha," the Russian laughed. "Isn't that good, what?"

I was in a quandary. I wanted to say something rude, but I also had to keep up appearances; and so I said, truthfully enough: "He looks terrible, I think."

"You are a German, *Herr*?" the Russian inquired.

When I said I was from Berlin, my friend and I were promptly invited to some vodka and

*Schnaps.* We joined a group of four Soviet majors and one civilian, and there was talk about Berlin, America, and the international situation. One of them remarked that the Berlin air lift could not continue for long, and that the Americans would suffer a terrible loss of prestige.

My friend kept winking at me anxiously. But I had no intention of talking in any case. I felt like a man who finds himself at a party where the others, not knowing him, talk scandal about his family, and who, half amused and half furious, eggs them on to tell all.

Overriding everything was the astonishing ignorance of these Russians. One of them thought the United States capital was New York. Another talked about Mr. Truman and Mr. Dewey as being the candidates of the Republican Party. If Mr. Wallace and the Democratic Party could not defeat them now, they would do so after the next war.

Yet they talked like men convinced of being experts on foreign affairs. One officer in particular, apparently a member of the Public Information branch, impressed his hearers with quotations from the editorials of various provincial newspapers in America and England. Apparently it occurred to no one that the *Dismal Swamp Gazette* and the *Marston Moor Herald* were not necessarily the mouthpieces of the State Department and the Foreign Office.

Among the cartoons there were several describ-



ing the sufferings of the unemployed in the U.S., and somebody asked how many unemployed America had. The civilian said the U.S.A. had six million fully and six million partially unemployed.<sup>1</sup> "Isn't that rather a high figure?" I could not resist asking. He drew himself up and said: "Those are the figures given by Professor Shneerson in his report on the aggravation of the crisis of capitalism, submitted to the State Planning Commission." He had to catch his breath and then went on: "I am with the State Planning Commission." I could see pearls of sweat on my friend's brow, and, not wanting to torture him, I accepted the Russian's reply.

Their oversimplifications, the neat and yet so infantile classification of everything into black and white, made it hard to believe that these men were holding responsible positions. As they saw it, there was, on the one hand, the America of Mr. Roosevelt and Mr. Wallace—the America of oppressed Negroes, enslaved workers, and shackled intellectuals fighting for democracy. On the other hand, there was the semi-Fascist America of Marshall and Wall Street—of the Ku Klux Klan, the press, the millionaires, and the imperialists determined to destroy the Soviet Union.

None of this was surprising, unless it was the naïveté with which it was expressed. But what fascinated me was the half-wistful, half-frightened way they talked about America. Even when

<sup>1</sup> Actual highest figure in 1948 was 2,500,000.

they castigated it, you saw how, to them, America was something out of this world—a mixture of monster and fairy prince. Something greedy, cruel, decadent, and voluptuous, but also something so rich and efficient, so inventive, glittering, and Daedalian. Something that defied human understanding and therefore seemed full of menace.

“You see,” my friend said, as we were on our way home, “that’s where one of the dangers of war comes in. If the Russians had a clear mind and a clear picture of America, they would never dare to provoke a war. But they are confused and scared, and their inferiority complex has hopelessly bedeviled them.”

“What I find so hard to understand,” I said, “is that all the Russians I have talked to really believe in America’s aggressive intentions.”

“You mustn’t forget,” he answered, “that these Russians have had the Leninist dogma rammed into them until it oozes out of their eyes and ears. To them it’s absolutely certain that the two opposing systems of Soviet Communism and American capitalism cannot exist side by side. They believe in one world, and they must destroy Americanism to make it their world. Now, if you believe that a clash is inevitable, then you must attribute to your enemy the same determination to destroy you as you possess to destroy him.”

I asked: “But why should the Russians be scared? It’s one thing to believe in the inevitability

of a clash, but quite another to become frightened by a mere assumption."

"Remember," answered my friend, "when the war ended, Russia was exhausted to the point of collapse. America, on the other hand, was at the very apex of its power. A Russian colleague at the time said to me: 'If the Americans fight us now, we'll collapse like a house of cards. But,' he added, 'luckily their policy isn't as elastic as ours would be if the tables were reversed.'"

"That knowledge of their weakness has haunted the Soviet leaders ever since. As they never believed in the possibility of a peaceful side-by-side, all their efforts had to be directed toward redressing this unbalance of power. So at home they maintained a huge army, pushed ahead with the development of great war industries, and amassed an enormous force of tanks, airplanes, and submarines. Abroad they seized every opportunity to strengthen their position, not caring about treaties or agreements. But their people were tired and exhausted, and only an unceasing propaganda campaign, showing them to be threatened by American imperialism, could justify the new burdens that the Soviet rulers were imposing on the Russian people.

"Then, when America and the other Western nations reacted in self-defense, the Russians became the prisoners of their own dogma and their own propaganda. Like the magician's apprentice, they cannot control the spirits they have called.

They have talked for so long about American aggression that they now magnify American reaction to their own actions until it deprives them of all cool calculations. That's why I believe—and I know many people who have intimate contact with the Russians and who share my view—that it's impossible to try to assess the probable course of Russian policy. In this explosive situation there's only one safe and constructive policy now, and that is for America to rearm as fast as its huge industrial capacity will permit. That's the only hope for us behind the Iron Curtain."

I had to think of this conversation next evening when I sat in a movie theater and watched a film called *The Russian Question*. As it turned out, the title was a misnomer, for the film was entirely devoted to the American Question. It dealt with the fate of an American journalist who had written an honest book about the Soviet Union and for that reason was persecuted by the reactionary bosses of the press and Congress. It was a ludicrous piece of propaganda to one who knew the reality of American life. But in the minds of millions of Eastern Europeans it must have caused loathing for a civilization so immoral and destructive.

Yet there was also a pleasant side to my stay in Dresden, for the Russians have made a great effort to revive the artistic life of their zone. In Dresden alone there are two opera houses, three theaters for drama, three for musical comedies, two variety

theaters, and several concert halls. I attended some fine performances.

The same flourishing artistic life exists throughout the Soviet zone. "The Russians are giving every support to the stage," an actor told me. "We are extremely well paid and get extra rations of foodstuffs and clothing. As far as art is concerned, the Russians are the most wonderful people on earth. But it isn't easy to please them when the ideological bug starts biting them." And he told me that he had been acting in a play by the name of *Colonel Kusmin*, in which several Soviet soldiers fresh out of battle enter a German house. Their make-up and their torn uniforms were realistic to the point of showing them stained with the grime of battle.

While the performance was still progressing, a Russian colonel stalked behind the stage and indignantly demanded to see the producer. "How dare you send Soviet soldiers on the stage in a dirty condition? Understand that Soviet soldiers always wash their hands and faces before entering a German house." And from then onward the battle-weary troops had to appear in brand-new uniforms, looking as clean as little boys going to a birthday party.

■

## CHAPTER XI

### THE PRISONERS OF PIRNA



I HAD BEEN DRIVING myself hard since my rendezvous with Ritter, so that I was glad to fall in with Walter's suggestion of a day's outing on the River Elbe. He had brought a friend along, a Herr P—, who owned a soft-drink factory and was a former Lutheran parson. Our little white paddle steamer was crowded with several hundred high-school girls and a thousand or more other passengers from Dresden.

It was obvious that most of them had not had a real holiday for a long time. They were loudly enthusiastic about everything—the warm sun and the gentle breeze, the crowds of naked children swimming close to our noisy paddles, the flute concerts of the school girls, and, most of all, the sensation of moving along, of not having to walk, trudge, carry burdens, stand in queues, fight for places. As we watched them, crowded together and gaily consuming their unappetizing sandwiches and lukewarm synthetic lemonade, I marveled at the relativity of happiness.

At Pirna a chill fell over the ship. The little town, nestled close to the Elbe, looked picturesque enough. But as we came closer we noticed that the banks were lined by a gray-green mass of men. All along the river, men were lying and sitting on the grass and the stones. At first we thought they were Russian troops. Then we saw their thin faces sticking out of decayed uniforms. "Homeless prisoners of war from Russia," Walter said. "They've come back, but their families and homes are gone." The Russians had temporarily housed them in the old castle of Pirna.

The paddles reduced speed, the noise of the water died down, and the song of the men came drifting over to us—a sad, haunting air that neither of us knew. On board all laughter and chatter had stopped, and behind us a pigtailed teen-age girl burst into tears. Walter tried to console her, and she said her father was still a prisoner in Russia.

The old atmosphere did not return to the ship until, an hour later, we reached the Königstein, the ancient fortress of Saxon kings from whose forbidding rock General Giraud had undertaken his adventurous wartime flight to Vichy. A few miles further, and we came to the Czech border where the ship turned around. We went ashore and walked past groups of heavily armed Soviet soldiers. A horde of brown little boys performed antics on diving boards, and the Russians cheered them merrily. A pretty little inn was decorated

with red flags and garlands. From its terrace we could look far over the Czech border into a deserted land, where the fields had grown wild with weeds.

Our talk had turned from the prisoners of Pirna to the prisoners of war still in Russia. It was a subject on which immeasurable bitterness against the Russians had grown up among the Germans. The Soviets had repeatedly promised to return all German prisoners by the end of 1948. Molotov had made the promise to Britain and the United States, and Marshal Sokolovsky had made it to the Germans. Yet close to a million Germans were still being held captive in the Soviet Union. At the current rate of repatriation several hundred thousand men would still be in Russia by the middle of 1949, four years after the end of hostilities.

Walter had himself been a prisoner in Russian hands for three years, from the fall of 1942 to the fall of 1945. "I can understand their treating us the way they did," he said. "If they worked us fourteen hours a day with insufficient food, that was no worse than what they demanded of their own people while fighting with their backs to the wall. If they let hundreds of thousands die like dogs, well, they just didn't have the medical services and the food to keep them alive. But to hold men for years after they had already been in captivity for two or three years when the war ended, that is barbaric. It's the kind of conduct



that convinces me that the Soviet leaders are evil men. Mankind will not regain its dignity and purpose until those men have gone the way of Hitler, Goebbels, Ribbentrop, and Streicher."

Herr P— had been silent. I asked him what he thought, and, giving a sigh, he said: "Walter's words might have been spoken by any German who is not a Communist. But I'm afraid the Russians have done more than make themselves the target of our hatred. What is worse is that they have virtually squashed the hope of a spiritual revival in Germany. By its contempt for the principles of humanity, Soviet policy has disheartened those Germans who were ready for a genuine change of spirit. It has made others forget the Germans' responsibility for the desolation and dishonor in which they now dwell. And finally it has given the Nazis a postdated excuse with which to justify their own deeds."

I was forcibly reminded of these words in the evening after our return to Dresden. Herr P—, who had a car, the result of a friendship with a Soviet Army captain, took us to his home for supper. He gave us something to eat while his wife went out to ask several neighbors to come over.

They were four bald and flabby businessmen who evidently were doing well out of contracts for the occupation forces. When I asked Herr P— later how they could square their violently anti-Soviet views with their readiness to work for the

Russians, he smiled and answered: "I suspect their philosophy can be summed up in the words: It is sweeter to live like a pig than to die like a dog."

Herr P— introduced Walter and me as "reliable" business friends from Dresden, and he told them of our experience at Pirna. The conversation immediately turned to talk about "injustices," the injustices committed by the victors against the German people. The Russians were bitterly criticized for holding the war prisoners, for the Oder-Neisse frontier and the driving out of millions of Germans from Polish-occupied Germany, for their slave-labor policy in the uranium mines in Saxony, and generally for behaving like barbarians. The Americans were blamed for their black-marketeering and for the Nürnberg war criminal trials and executions; the British for wanting to ruin Germany as a potential competitor, for the dismantling of factories, and for depriving Germany of merchant shipping; the French for annexing the Saar and for living off the land in their zone like a swarm of locusts. All three democracies were rated for not having recognized the Russian danger at an earlier time.

I said that I thought a very sharp distinction should be drawn between Russian actions in Germany on the one hand and American, British, and French on the other. Mistakes had been made by the Western powers, such as in the policy of dismantling plant, and if the Americans were carrying out a hateful job of hanging, it was only be-

cause the Germans had not done that themselves. Generally speaking, any occupation of a defeated country was good for neither vanquished nor victor, and abuses, such as black-marketing, could be expected. At the same time the United States and England had set a record of reconstruction, of constructive aid to the Germans that had lifted Western Germany from an abyss of chaos to a high level of economic and physical rehabilitation, intellectual freedom, and personal safety. What the Russians had done was the exact opposite; they had merely enlarged the footsteps of the Nazis.

The businessmen admitted that a difference existed, but could not see that it was basic. "The victors are all determined to ruin Germany for ever; only their methods are different," said one of them. The others agreed, and then they continued with the animadversions and the complaints that had become so universal in Germany.

Herr P—, who had been silent most of the time, suddenly spoke out with great vehemence. "Many harsh things have happened in Germany, and many harsh things will continue to happen," he said. "But have you forgotten the cause of all this? Did we, who have reaped the whirlwind, not sow the wind? Have you forgotten the words: 'Ye have ploughed wickedness, ye have reaped iniquity'? Surely the Russians would not be here today, our cities would not be destroyed, if we as a nation had not gone to war?"

There was dead silence. I reflected that this was the first time I had heard any German speak out as Herr P— did. After a while Herr P— continued: "I was in Hamburg during those dreadful days in the summer of 1943 when 50,000 people burned to death in the Anglo-American air attack. As we sat in our shelter—the only one in that area strong enough to resist the heat and the high explosives, with human torches screaming in their agony of death outside, a woman among us cried out in terror: 'What we did to the Jews, it is now being visited upon us a thousand times.' I think almost all of us felt that sense of retribution in those days. But alas,

The devil was sick, the devil a monk would be;

The devil was well, the devil a monk was he."

One of the businessmen said he objected strongly to all such talk about collective responsibility and retribution. He thought that those Nazis who had committed crimes should be made to atone, but that ordinary people like himself, whose personal conscience was clear, could not be expected to have anything but a deep sense of grievance under the treatment given to Germany now. "What could I, for instance, have done to stop Hitler from going into Poland? Should I have gone into the street and registered my protest by shouting that Hitler was leading us to

destruction? You know I wouldn't have lived another day. Or take a less extreme case—should I have refused to dismiss a Jewish employee, only to lose my business and render my family destitute?”

Herr P— said: “I don't blame you at all for not having resisted single-handed. One cannot expect a normal man to have the spirit of a saint or the lack of imagination of a hero. And few people had the plain luck of having an uncle in America to whom they could go for refuge.

“But you, although your sympathy was with your Jewish bookkeeper, you did not want to suffer and you looked the other way. You preferred the easy way out—and who of us has not learned that much from life, that the easy way out always turns into the hard and stony road in the end?

“You purchased your immunity from suffering without having to put the purchase price on the table, and now that you have to pay up, you speak of injustice.

“But you went further than that—you and I. We gave the salute and signed our letters: *Heil Hitler!*—a mere formality. We joined this organization and that organization, and paid our dues—a mere matter of common sense. We did no more than that.”

The businessman next to him interrupted impatiently and said: “That's just it! Most Germans

did no more than that. Yet they're being made to suffer for the crimes of a minority."

Herr P— shook his head and went on: "Then came the days when every loud-speaker in Germany shook with the fanfares of victory. Do you remember how they always preceded the '*Sondermeldung*'—the special report—from the Führer's headquarters? We thought we had won the war, and we thanked God that we had been sensible in 1933 and kept on the right side of the fence thereafter and had not been such fools as our old Social Democratic friend, who would now stay in a concentration camp for the rest of his life. We looked through our files to make sure we had paid all our subscriptions, and we thought of the wonderful jobs that would soon be open to our sons—in Poland and the Ukraine.

"Yes, if Hitler had won the war, we all would have shared in the victory of the Nazis. Now that it has come otherwise—how dare we complain about having to pay the price of their failure?"

"Even the Russians' price?" somebody asked.

Walter, who was walking around the room, said: "Yes, even the Russians' price. And there lies the greatest tragedy of it all. What the Soviets are doing is bad enough by itself, and the distress it causes is grievous in the extreme. But what is worse in the long run is that we are in the gravest danger—and I'm afraid most of us have succumbed to it by now—of being hypnotized by

our ordeal and of completely forgetting that we unloosed the flood. If we continue along this path of nourishing our grievances, then the Russians will have defeated us in a twofold sense: first on the battlefield; and a second time by letting the evil beam of Communism prevent us from seeing the beam in our own eye, thus rendering us unfit for a new beginning. If that is coming to pass, we will surely be lost for ever."

Herr P— drove Walter and me home. En route we continued our conversation, and Herr P— said: "Of course the conception of guilt cannot be isolated among the nations any more than within a nation. Other nations have their measure of responsibility for the growth of National Socialism. But I do not believe that this entitles us to minimize our own overwhelming guilt. What the others have done or failed to do is something for their own peoples to examine. Each nation must learn to search its own conscience and examine its own actions rather than sit in judgment over others if the world is to return to a more peaceful existence."

We said good night, and as we left his car Herr P— turned to me and said: "When you write about this, please remember we are all like the prisoners of Pirna. We don't know where we are going."

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## CHAPTER XII

### A DIFFICULT STRETCH



FROM DRESDEN to Chemnitz is no great distance—some fifty miles—but it turned out to be long enough for me to wish I had never covered it. I had left Dresden early, delighted with the clear sunny morning. And although I knew I was entering into the toughest part of my undertaking, I felt confident. My plan was to go southeast to Chemnitz and thence probe the forbidden area of the uranium-mining district around Aue, the Siberia of the Soviet zone. Walter and I had left nothing to chance. He had supplied me with a new set of papers, which identified me as an organizer of labor for the uranium mine at Wolkenstein, halfway between Chemnitz and the Czech border.

“You’re going to enter the most unhealthy area in Europe,” Walter had said, “and your only chance of success lies in being brazen in your approach and sure of your ground.”

He had brought along an engineer and a miner who had escaped from one of the uranium mines,



and together they had spent hours coaching me in the details of Shaft Himmelreich. I doubt whether I can ever forget that Shaft Himmelreich is part of Uranium Project No. 5; that it is surrounded by barbed wire, close to Shafts Adolf, Dreibrüder, Johannis, and 181; that its director is Major Belloff; that it's 120 meters deep and has galleries going at an angle of eighty degrees. The miners, I learned, are living in Warmbad, ten minutes away, where the sanatorium and all private houses have been requisitioned and the local population deported—and all the other little details that might help me stand the test of cross-examination.

When I came to the Dresden-Chemnitz highway, it took me more than an hour before I could get a lift on a van carrying vegetables. At first everything went smoothly. Then, at the crossroad to Freiberg and Meissen—the two words looked so odd in Cyrillic letters—the driver said: "Police blockade."

I counted four German policemen, two Russian MP's, and two men and one woman in civilian clothes. They worked fast and efficiently.

When it was our turn, the German policeman said: "Are you hitchhiking?"

Guilelessly I said: "Yes."

"You've to talk to the security officer there," he said, and then, turning to the driver: "Don't you know it's forbidden to pick up passengers on this highway?"

While the van drove away I went over to the designated individual. He was a philanthropic-looking elderly man, standing there like the living antithesis of his cruel trade. The next fifteen minutes were a nightmare of mental gymnastics.

It appeared that first of all I had broken the law by soliciting a ride on the highway. That would cost me ten marks or a day in jail. Secondly, why wasn't I traveling by train? This was what had aroused his doubts. He scrutinized my documents with myopic care. There was something horribly degrading in just standing there and having four pieces of paper decide one's fate; and my mind went into a flight of protective fantasy by depicting all the good turns I would do to Karl if his papers would stand the test.

The officer asked: "Tell me about Wolkenstein." And then he began a barrage of why? what? who? when? how? that made me dig my thumbnail deep in the flesh of my middle finger. As he quizzed me more and more sharply, I began to feel that I was closer to perdition than at any time since the encounter with the fat man in Harzgerode.

He looked at my papers again and said: "There's a Berlin cancellation mark on your ration card. What were you doing there?"

"Visiting a friend."

"Whom?"

"Professor Jürgen Kuczynski."

"Tell me about him."

I had known Kuczynski in England before the war. He was now Professor of Economics at the Soviet-controlled Berlin University. He was also a member of the Communist People's Council—and the last person in the Soviet zone I would have wanted to visit.<sup>1</sup> Twice before, his name had proved useful as a Communist alibi. Therefore, when Walter had my Wolkenstein papers prepared, I had suggested that they should have a Berlin mark on them.

Now it seemed that the diversion was successful, and I reeled off a biographical talk about Kuczynski that must have surprised my questioner. He betrayed no reaction, however, and his eyes watched me closely. For a while he let me talk. Then without a change of expression he returned my papers, and, with the injunction to keep off the highway, he let me go. I walked away wondering how I could ever judge people by their faces again.

I took the crossroad to Freiberg, hoping I was clear of further trouble. Instead, I ran into four or five more police checks—I have forgotten the exact number. They were not so painstaking as

<sup>1</sup> I knew Kuczynski in prewar London when he was a go-between for the German Communists and I was managing director of Union Time, Ltd. Union Time was sponsored by businessmen and political leaders to counter Nazi propaganda in England and promote the activities of the anti-Nazi forces in Germany. Like other anti-Nazi representatives, Kuczynski received funds from Union Time. Our contacts ceased when he supported the Stalin-Hitler alliance. Later he was interned by the British authorities. He returned to Berlin after the war, where he has become a prominent spokesman for the Soviet Military Administration.

the first. But, as I could never know in advance what was going to happen when the police sign—a stick with a little red-and-white disc—was raised, they were strenuous enough.

I had expected to be in Chemnitz well before midday. When night came, I was in a haystack ten miles away from it, and without having eaten anything since early morning. The night was mild, and the beauty of waking up, with the dawn coming over the fields, almost made up for the pangs of hunger. I walked for a couple of miles without meeting a soul, and then washed and shaved in the River Zschopau.

When I climbed up the banks, a Russian soldier was looking down at me. "You come here." He was a raw-boned fellow in his early twenties, unshaven, untidy, and apparently unarmed. His German was fragmentary, and he had a way of barking out single words that gave him an extraordinary doglike expression.

"You show documentas," he said. I handed him my papers, and by the way he peered at the big and the small seals on them, I knew he could not read. After a while, his face grew bright. "You documentas good!" he barked, and then unexpectedly: "You come."

I followed him along a field. There was a farm at the end of it, surrounded by a neglected orchard. In the manure-covered yard the soldier stopped and shouted: "Farmer, you come!" An old man appeared in no time, and the Russian

turned to me. "You tell farmer give me five pig meat."

I looked at the farmer, who glared at me furiously. "But what's all this? What have I to do with this?" I asked.

"You good documentas—you authority—tell farmer to give me five pig meat!" he barked, stamping his right foot on the ground.

The farmer's expression changed when he saw my bewilderment. "This soldier," he said, "has his family living with him near Chemnitz, and for months he's been asking me to give him pork to take home. This morning he came again, and I told him that I wasn't allowed to sell pork without official authority. That's why he's picked on you, I suppose."

The comic opera had a happy ending, at least for me. Since no amount of argument would pacify the Russian, the farmer agreed to give him something. I had a feeling that the farmer sensed my anxiety not to get involved in any complications, and he gave me a long, strange look as the two went into the house.

I disappeared through the orchard and back to the road, where I kept on running until I thought I was at a safe distance. Oddly enough, there was not another police check, not even at the outskirts of Chemnitz. I walked into the city, if it can still be called a city, for now it is only a hollow shell, with the center burned and blasted by bombs, and the suburbs showing rows and blocks of disman-

tled factories—factories without windows, doors, machinery, or life.

The town was teeming with tens of thousands of poorly dressed, underfed people. They paid no attention to the brassy din of military march music coming out of loud-speakers at every streetcar stop, nor to the giant picture of Stalin outside the Hotel Stadt Chemnitz. They crowded excitedly around small posters and before the entrances to banks and offices. For a short, absurd moment I thought that war had broken out. Then, as I managed to push closer, I read the announcement of the second currency reform for the Soviet zone. The old "sticker mark" was being exchanged for the newly printed "German mark."

This was serious news. I hurried to the station to buy some food on the black market, but I was too late. Nobody wanted my money.

"We take only the new mark," I was told.

There was nothing I could do but line up before one of the exchange offices. For five hungry hours I stood there, and what I heard during that time was more condensed hatred for the Russian-controlled authorities of the Soviet zone than any I had met with so far. The news had spread that many of the old marks were being confiscated on the pretext of being forgeries, and anybody who handed in more than a few hundred marks was sure to be deprived of part of his holdings. When it was my turn I handed in my bundle of notes. The official looked at my identity papers and re-

turned them, money and all. "You live in Wolkenstein!" he said. "You'll have to change your money there."

I remonstrated with him, but he remained adamant. Wolkenstein was only twenty miles south of Chemnitz, and it was the last place I wanted to visit. It was in the center of the prohibited area, and going there would have been suicide.

After having fasted for twenty-seven hours, I could not even buy a single slice of bread. My money was valueless, and Chemnitz a city of strangers.

I offered my whole nine hundred marks to a black-marketeer in the station if he would give me enough money to buy some food and a ticket to Dresden, but he would not do it. Nor could I risk hitchhiking back to Dresden, and I saw I would have to walk back all the way.

I was again lucky, as far as the police were concerned. They had their hands full with the crowds wanting to change their money, and by nightfall I had walked a fair distance. In the darkness I went into a field of turnips and ate one. There was rather more night traffic on the road than I had expected, and in order to keep away from the headlights, I took a path that seemed to go parallel with the main road. After a while, however, I had the feeling that I was going in the wrong direction, and when I tried to get back to the road, I discovered that I had lost my way.

It had begun to rain. I kept on walking over fields and through small woods until I came to a farm. While I stood there, wondering whether I should risk seeking shelter in the barn, a dog began to bark furiously and settled the problem for me. I was backing away cautiously when a door was opened. Somebody carrying an oil lamp came out and walked across the cobbled yard to the barn. I went closer and watched until the light came out again. It was held by a big woman with a blanket thrown over her head. The dog had stopped barking.

The urge to find shelter, to get out of the rain, or at least, to know my whereabouts, made me call out to her. As soon as I heard my voice break into the stillness I realized what a hopeless try it was. The woman stood still, stared into the night, the lamp swinging from her hand. I called again that I had lost my way. She made a violent half turn, dropped the lamp, and in a few flying leaps was back in the house. There came a noise as of broken glass, and then the door was bolted—bolted again, and bolted a third time. In the barn the dog barked furiously until its voice turned into a hideous yelp.

I walked fast over the muddy ground. When I came to a coppice I no longer cared and sat on the wet grass under a tree. In the next three or four hours, until dawn came and the rain ended, I was filled with all the bitterness of all the outcasts.



But the morning came, glistening and warm, and all that remained of the night was a wet suit and a devil of an ague. I had a breakfast of wheat from the stalk, filled my pockets with ears, and then went and hid for the day in a deserted baking house in the woods.

It took me two nights and two days to go from there to Dresden. Fear of running into a police patrol or a road block made me sleep most of the day and walk at night. But my progress was slow because I walked over fields and through woods at a distance from the road. All this time I lived on what I could find—berries and wheat and rye and swedes, and once I drank some milk out of a five-gallon can that was waiting at a farm gate to be picked up by the dairy cart.

The nights were now mild and dry, and the glittering sky over the captive land was of an indescribable beauty. During the second night I again lost my way and, in the undergrowth of a wood, encountered another night walker—the former librarian of the Russian Uranium Institute in Freiberg—a sixty-year-old man on his way into the American zone. On his back he carried a rucksack full of books.

When we had both overcome the shock of our meeting in the dark—I had stepped on his hand and shall never forget the horror of that experience—he told me of his efforts to transfer his beloved library to Bayreuth. He had lost everything

else. His Jewish wife had been killed in a Nazi concentration camp; his home had been wrecked in an air raid; his son, a brilliant physicist, had been deported to Russia. There he had recently been warned that since he had too much inside information about Soviet military projects, he would never be allowed to go back to Germany, and that he had better become a Soviet citizen and take a Russian wife.

A few weeks ago another blow had fallen on the old man. The Russians had discovered the existence of his private library of old scientific books, a valuable collection that had taken him thirty years of hard work to bring together. "When they told me," he said, "that I should prepare the library for shipment to Russia, I felt that, with my books being all I had left in this world, I might as well risk my life trying to save them."

His face looked thin and white in the moonlight. In a fond, protective gesture he stretched out his hands over the rucksack between his knees, and went on: "So I selected the hundred most precious volumes and carried them at night into a hiding place near by. Then I went into hiding myself, and I am now on my third trip bringing these books into the American zone. After this one there'll be three more crossings, for I cannot carry much more than fifteen books at a time."

We shared a turnip, which I had taken from

a field, and I promised I would look him up in Bayreuth after we were both safely across the border. A few weeks later I did call at his address, to be told that he had been shot dead by the Russians on his fourth trip.

## CHAPTER XIII

### ATOMIC AGE



I ARRIVED IN DRESDEN after midnight, my German staple-fiber suit all crumpled up, and looking like the tramp I was. As I moved furtively through passages, ruined houses, or back yards, to avoid being seen by the police, I felt like the Dickens character who said: "Any man may be in good spirit and good temper when he's well dressed. There an't much credit in that."

Walter's shock at finding me at his door was, I thought, a close rival to his reaction at seeing me turn up in the first place. He had been relieved when I had left, and here I was again.

I slept for eleven hours without a break. In the meantime Walter borrowed some money, pressed my suit, and obtained a priority ticket for the fast Dresden-Chemnitz train. "And get out of this zone as fast as you can," he begged me, "for our sake just as much as for yours."

The train journey to Chemnitz was more comfortable than my previous travel experience in this direction. The Russian MP's who checked my pa-

pers were polite and did not ask me any questions. Thus, by the time I arrived in Chemnitz and saw the white warning board with the heading: PROHIBITED AREA—TICKETS ISSUED ONLY AGAINST MINERS' IDENTITY CARDS OR SPECIAL PASSES, my spirits had revived, and I decided to go ahead with my original plan and break my trip in Chemnitz to see what I could find out about the uranium mines.

My immediate problem was to find a room. I could, of course, have gone to an hotel, but the law required registration with the police in person and within twelve hours after arrival in Chemnitz. Since I preferred not to register, the best chance of finding a shelter seemed to be in the railway station. On its black market everything was procurable; from food and clothes to false papers, furniture, human flesh, counterfeit money, motor cars stolen in the American zone and smuggled over the border with Russian blessing, guns, jewelry, and forged ration cards. For a while I stood around watching, fascinated by the whispers, the winks, the indecent gestures, the greedy bargaining, the fearful glances. How Hogarth's eyes would have reveled in this! I thought.

There were two policemen in the hall, but they were concerned only with keeping a through passage open. I was sure there were plain-clothes men around. The Russians were bound to keep an eye on such an important concourse of the underworld. The difficulty was to decide who might

be a detective and who a superior black-market operator. At last I felt fairly certain that a thin little man with the neck and the eyes of a turtle, who sucked his teeth continuously, was the right person for me. He was discreetly directing the activities of several young touts, one of whom had asked me whether I had anything to sell or wanted to buy something.

My guess was good. Herr Buch—that was the name he gave—could offer a small room, simple but all to myself, and no questions would be asked. The price? Only fifty marks a night. He said that with such an air of reasonableness that I could not help admiring his nerve. Fifty marks was roughly five times as much as I would have been charged in a good hotel.

When I gasped, he said: "You needn't argue. I never haggle, and you can take it or leave it. Yes or no, what is it?" I had enough money to pay his price for two or three days and still be left with sufficient to pay a guide for the way back into the American zone. But it was going to be a close shave, especially if the need to pay a bribe arose. I accepted his offer, as I needed the room, and, besides, I hoped that he might prove useful as a contact. "Come along then," he said, and led the way into the town.

"*Ein richtiges Dreckloch!*" I exclaimed as he opened the door to the filthy little attic. "A muck hole's better than a police cell," he said laconically. I thought he took my criminal status too

much for granted, but I swallowed my pride and hygienics and paid him his rent.

Buch was cruel, greedy, and a hideous parasite. But he was also discreet and willing to be of service. I went to him several times to ask for advice, and he gave it without showing any curiosity to know who I was or what I was doing. He seemed to be on good terms with the police; someone told me there wasn't a policeman within twenty miles of Chemnitz whom Buch had not bribed.

There were some two hundred names of towns and villages on the Erzgebirge prohibition board in Chemnitz station. They represented an area of nearly a thousand square miles, delimited in the south by the Czech border, and in the north by the highway between Plauen and Chemnitz.

The Erzgebirge—a literal translation would be ore mountains—has been mined for non-ferrous metals since the days of Christopher Columbus, and before. Gradually through the centuries the known deposits became exhausted, and by 1939 only a few thousand miners were digging for cobalt, lead, zinc, and pitchblende. The advent of the atomic age and the arrival of the Russians in 1945 conspired to arouse these sleepy mountains to a nightmarish awakening. For pitchblende is an oxide of uranium. Soviet scientists, geologists, and physicists invaded the picturesque villages. In 1946 they were followed by the first batches of conscripted workers from Eastern Germany.

Since then the transports have arrived day after

day, and Chemnitz, through which most of them pass, has become known as the "Gate of Tears." I watched the arrival of one transport with its hundreds of dejected young men who had been conscripted by the labor exchanges. Another, under heavy Russian guard, brought convicts and prostitutes from Leipzig and Dresden. A third train arrived with hapless prisoners of war recently returned from Russia. It included some volunteers—men who had been attracted by the promise of high wages and generous rations.

As the number of men and women who were driven into the Erzgebirge grew, so the Russians pulled the blanket of secrecy more tightly over this region. They declared it a prohibited area, surrounded it with a living wall of police, and imposed heavy penalties for anybody found leaving or entering the Erzgebirge without permission.

Yet they could not stop the rumors and the news from spreading over Germany, until today the word "Erzgebirge" is to the Germans of the Eastern zone what the names of Buchenwald and Belsen were to the anti-Nazis of Europe five years ago.

Before going into the Soviet zone I had talked with miners who had escaped to Western Germany, and I had taken their stories with more than a grain of salt. Yet, during the time I spent in Chemnitz and its neighborhood, I found that they had not exaggerated.

The uranium miners work up to twelve hours



a day, urged on by Soviet convict soldiers, who act as overseers, and who themselves are punished Draconically if their charges fail to meet the daily norms. There is no mechanical help, no ventilation; and the most elementary safety devices and health precautions are lacking. The miners work knee-deep in water and are exposed to radioactivity. To this come the ravages of syphilis spread through the brothels established by the Russians for both troops and miners and supplied with the dregs of the big cities of the zone. Against such odds, even good food and high pay are of no avail—especially since much of the miners' money goes for gin, which is available in unlimited quantities.

Into this Dantesque setting some 400,000 men have been driven since 1946. The lucky ones—more than 50,000—have succeeded in escaping into the Anglo-American zone. Almost half as many are known to have perished through accidents, suicides, or diseases, and a few have been allowed to return home, sick and disabled. Others, at least 10,000, have been sent to Joachimsthal in Czechoslovakia, where the Soviet Army operates uranium mines in the form of a huge penal camp for Soviet soldiers and German miners alike. Yet at no time has the number of men working in the uranium mines exceeded 100,000.

For a time the fate of the others remained a mystery. All that was known was that men who during the first few weeks in the Erzgebirge had shown themselves submissive and physically strong

were leaving for an unknown destination. Then a few of them escaped to tell where the journey had ended—in the wastes and forests of Siberia.

Throughout Germany the uranium mines have aroused hatred and bitterness against the Russians. One German Communist said to me: "The uranium mines are our greatest liability—but," he added, "what's happening there must be done. If it helps the Soviets to produce the atomic bomb, we are all for it, no matter what the cost. After all, what counts in the long run is not that we are popular at this moment, but that we are going to win the atomic war."

Whether or not the Erzgebirge uranium mines make a material difference in Russia's atomic preparedness, I cannot say. But it is undeniable that the two Soviet companies, Vitriol and Wismut, are shipping enormous quantities of pitchblende into the Soviet Union.

I was glad when it was time to leave Chemnitz, with its cowed and hungry people, its crowds of Soviet soldiers, and the garish picture of Stalin outside the MVD headquarters, the Hotel Stadt Chemnitz. Illuminated at night by hundreds of colored electric bulbs, the picture had a ghoulish and Oriental appearance.

While I was waiting at the station for a train to take me to Plauen, a man in blue overalls sat down by my side. He had a wicker basket, and out of it he took a bundle of baby shoes, mumbling to himself as he inspected them. The shoes

turned out to be a premium awarded for good work in the shoe factory where he was employed.

"Why can't they give us food instead?" he said furiously. "In one factory they give each worker a dozen brassières; in another two dozen plastic combs. Now we have to go out on the farms and try to swap that sort of thing for food."

I had an idea, and asked him to sell me three pairs of the little white shoes. They proved a good investment, since I had to change trains twice and there were several checks of identity papers. I exhibited my wares and explained that I was traveling in order to exchange my work premiums, and each time the shoes were a help. One policeman even thought of a customer for me. His sister was expecting a baby in a neighboring village, and he wanted to take me to her. Although I came close to angering him and arousing his suspicions, I was anxious to be on my way. For one thing, we were near both the American and the Czech frontier and in an area teeming with police, uniformed and secret. Besides, since leaving Chemnitz I had been able to think of nothing but the border crossing. My old faculty of snatching a short spell of sleep at any time and under almost any circumstances had deserted me. The slightest unexpected noise made me jump. I knew I had reached my limits.

## CHAPTER XIV

### RETURN



IN PLAUE, another bedraggled industrial city, I had two addresses to choose from. One had been given to me in Berlin, and the other by my host in Chemnitz. As the second address was close to the station I went there first. The house had recently been rebuilt and painted in gaudy colors, and it stood out in this half-deserted stretch of rubble and ruins like a popinjay. It seemed a strange place to be concerned with clandestine matters. However, I rang the bell, and a girl in a red sweater opened the door, smiled, and said: "We're open at night only," without waiting for me to say anything. I asked for Herr Frohlieb, and she led me inside to a little room heavy with leather furniture, embroidered cushions, and the smell of cheap perfume. Herr Frohlieb turned out to be a blond young man, well dressed and affable, but with a hard mouth and too many gold teeth.

I said: "Herr Buch from Chemnitz has sent me; you know him, don't you?"

"Yes, I've met him," he said guardedly. "What

do you want?" When I told him I needed a guide for the border, he merely asked back how I had met Herr Buch. "In the station," I said. "I lodged with him for a few days."

"Why should you think that I've something to do with the border?"

"Herr Buch said so."

I saw that I had missed. His eyes had become little black points of suspicion and fear. "Herr Buch must have been drunk," he said fiercely. "He knows very well that all I do is to own this house of joy." He took a deep breath and, changing from anger into stilted ludicrousness, went on: "And as for you, *mein Herr*, whoever you are, you might care to know that this is a strictly legal undertaking, that I have a permit from the police and the military, and that you are welcome to make use of our facilities if you can pay for them. But for the rest, I know nothing about the border, and if it were not for Herr Buch having sent me some very nice young ladies, I would report you to the authorities."

Having said this, he led the way to the door and took his leave with a clicking of the heels. I could sympathize with Herr Frohlieb. He was evidently a man with many business interests, and to expect him to run a serious risk with a stranger had been rather naïve on Herr Buch's part.

When I came out, two urchins begged for money. They could have walked out of a Limehouse photograph of 1880; they were the most

ragged and neglected juveniles I had seen since my arrival in Germany. I gave them a mark and asked where they lived. The elder looked disdainfully at the note in his hand and asked: "Is that all?" I said it was all the money I would give them.

They ran away a few yards, set up a furious howl of invectives, then kept on repeating: "He's come out of the knocking shop, and he's a mean old bastard." They followed me the length of the street, but as the area was almost deserted, only a few people witnessed the scene and thought it very funny. In Dimitrov Street there was more traffic and the two turned back, no doubt to look for a new victim.

After this I went in search of my other address. I discovered that I had to walk all through the town to the airfield. There, in a former Luftwaffe air-raid shelter, turned into temporary living quarters for dozens of families, I found the guide my Berlin friends had recommended. He was a Bavarian peasant in leather shorts and thick white stockings. He had a pleasant southern accent and a pink face, and my shock at finding him unenthusiastic over my request was all the greater because I liked him. He niddle-noddled, hemmed and hawed, and brought up various objections. For one thing, he wasn't going to cross the frontier himself. That had become too dangerous since so many Russian soldiers were deserting. All he was doing now was to take people close to the

border and give them directions on how to proceed. He had already four clients—two girls from the uranium mines, one Russian woman, and a fellow from Chemnitz—and he wasn't keen on taking any more.

In the end, under the influence of double fees, he agreed to take me along. I noticed that, unlike old Ritter, this guide did not remark about my being too fat. And he had every reason for not saying anything, I thought, as I looked down on the loose folds of my jacket, for I had lost close to forty pounds. When the two of us set off in the gathering dusk, the last I saw of Plauen was a banner demanding the withdrawal of all occupation forces from "the sacred soil of the Fatherland."

"Wouldn't that be dandy?" the Bavarian said scornfully. "The Russians would kill three birds with one stone. They would keep their army from being demoralized by contact with the West, maintain control of their zone through the SED and the new militia, and at the same time gain a free hand in Western Germany."

We met the rest of the party in a little cluster of pines. The man, a seedy-looking individual, claimed to be fleeing from the Russians for political reasons. The Russian woman, who spoke good German, said she had escaped from a forced-labor camp beyond the Ural Mountains.

I did not believe her, for, as far as I could see in the gray light, she had all the natural beauty of

a woman who had lived a sheltered and healthy country life, and I was puzzled as to who she might be. The two German girls, I thought, looked equally unconvincing. However, that had nothing to do with me. What worried me much more was being in such a relatively large group.

The guide knew his way. He took us over the gently undulating country through fields and woods. Only once did we have to crawl, and that was over a few hundred yards of stubble. After nearly three hours he stopped and said: "You'll have to make your own way now. The border is less than a mile from here." He advised us to spread out and gave us directions.

It was the darkest night yet since the beginning of my noctivagations, and the only thing that helped me was the guide's instructions to crawl in the lengthwise direction of the fields. But I soon found myself on an open stubble field and could not make out where I was going. I crawled on blindly, thinking of the game of blindman's buff we used to play as children and how we had always turned in a circle, and I tried desperately to keep in a straight line.

According to the guide, a wood was going to be our landmark for having reached the American side. But I crawled on, and there was no wood, only a little coppice. I was sure I was lost and decided it was useless to go much farther. When I found myself in some brush, I stopped there to wait for the morning.



Dawn came at last, and I was cold, damp, and tense. There were no woods either in front or back of me, only some distance to the right and the left, and I had no idea where I was. As it grew lighter, I tried to find a sign of life, yet as far as I could see, there was not a human being, Russian or American, policeman or farmer. The sun came out, and I crawled over the stubble into a barley field that stretched toward the wood on the left.

The barley stood high and gave fine cover. When I came out of it, a barefooted boy was driving an oxcart along a road. He saw me coming and stared.

"Where am I?" I asked. "American or Russian zone?"

He laughed out loud. "You're half a mile from the border in the American zone, of course."

A week ago, on the daunting and hungry stretch between Chemnitz and Dresden, I had bolstered up my courage by envisaging the first moments of being again in American-held territory. But now I neither kissed the soil nor leaped with joy. Instead, all my accumulated tension broke out in absurd anger over the words "of course," which the boy had used rather too emphatically, and I lectured him about their meaning's being quite different to a twig-chewing, barefooted so-and-so and to a stranger coming out of a barley field.

When that had been said and the frightened boy had shown me the way to the village of

Trogen, my mood mellowed and I enjoyed the late-summer beauty of the countryside. On the outskirts of the village two Bavarian policemen on bicycles stopped me.

"Illegal border crosser?" one of them questioned, with a glance at my dirty and crumpled suit; and without waiting for a reply, he added: "Let's see your papers."

It was an exciting feeling to speak the truth once again, and I told them that I was a British subject, a writer residing in America, that I had been born in Germany, but that I had no papers on me, as I had just come out of the Soviet zone. They laughed heartily, and one of them continued, imitating my voice: "And now I'm on my way to China, where I'm going to meet the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem." The truth, I discovered, sounded less convincing than the subterfuges and impositions I had practiced for three weeks.

However, I finally induced them to accompany me to the post office in near-by Hof, where a letter, with my British and American papers, was waiting for me. Before we entered the post-office building, they gave me a last warning, reminding me that it was a serious offense for a German to masquerade as an Allied national.

The length of their faces, when the letter was handed to me and when it revealed the blue passport with the royal coat of arms embossed in gold, considerably sweetened the bitter pills of ridicule they had made me swallow. They sug-

gested that as an Allied citizen I should report to the United States Constabulary Post No. 10, which was the post closest to the point where I had crossed the border.

As we drove up on the deserted highway, an opening among the pines suddenly revealed a tall flagpole, and on it, bright and clear in the sun, the American flag. There was a lump in my throat, and I had to swallow hard.

The post commander, young and blond Lieutenant Rhault, was puzzled. "Frankly," he said, "I don't know what to do with you; nothing like this has happened here before." While I had some chow—the best I ever tasted—he telephoned his headquarters. They told him to stand by, and after several hours of waiting, the news came through that I had been cleared.

As we sat talking over a mug of coffee, I wondered what had become of my companions. Rhault suggested I could probably find out in Moschendorf, near Hof, the camp where illegal border crossers were being held.

■

## CHAPTER XV

### MOSCHENDORF



I SPENT SEVERAL DAYS in Moschendorf, among Germans, Russians, and Czechs, a mass of humanity fleeing from the Soviets. The three women were there, but the man had not arrived.

"He's either been grabbed by the Ivan," a camp official said, "or he was a Russian spy and has managed to slip through into Bavaria." He added: "There's a lot of that brood coming over right now."

To my surprise I discovered that the women had spoken the truth. I attended the Russian woman's interrogation by intelligence officers, and as I sat through the hours of merciless cross-examination, my heart faltered belatedly at the thought of how my bogus identities would have wilted away under such a test.

The facts, as they emerged from this indomitable Russian, were astonishing enough. In almost two years she had walked more than 2,500 miles from the slave camps of Turinsk to join her husband, a former Soviet officer who had escaped

into the British zone. She had made her way from Asiatic Russia to Poland and the Soviet zone, across the Volga, the Don, the Dnepr, the Vistula, the Oder, and the Elbe, through summer and winter, over the Ural Mountains and the Pripet Marshes—and there was scarcely a wrinkle in her face.

Throughout her interrogation she had remained steadfast and imperturbable. But when they told her that she could join her husband in Essen in two days' time, she broke down. Outside, a Bavarian policeman said: "I wouldn't be surprised if those tears are the first she has shed since the Communists took her. If there are more Russians like her, I can see now why we lost the war."

Afterward I lunched with five or six German Red Cross men in a train attached to the camp, awaiting the arrival of prisoners from the Soviet Union. The conversation turned to the Russian woman, and I said that I could not get over the thought of anybody being able to walk such tremendous distances, live as a fugitive for two years, and show no traces of strain. How could any human being have such physical strength and nervous energy? I had found three weeks as much as I could stand, although I had been sheltered by friends most of the time.

Dr. Hampf, the camp physician, said: "You may well ask that. Millions of German soldiers have been asking themselves similar questions."

He and his colleagues had been army officers and later prisoners of war in Russia. Like other veterans of the war in Russia to whom I subsequently talked, they were impressed to the point of obsession by the tenacity, the almost unlimited ability of the Russian people to suffer hardships.

The German armies, they said, had gone into Russia confident, superbly trained, well-fed, and with equipment vastly better than that of the Russians. As long as their communications were open and the intricate machinery of staff work, supplies, and replacements kept working, the German armies were masters of the numerically superior Russians. But when conditions changed in the grip of the Russian winter, and the opposing forces were cut off and left to their own devices, then the Germans had to yield to even numerically inferior Russian groups.

On the level of the primitive functions of the human animal, the Russians were the stronger. When it was a matter of who could do with the least sleep, food, and clothes; who could live longest in a hole in the frozen ground; who could have his fingers amputated without anesthesia and still go back on guard duty an hour later; who could go without soap, medicines, and letters from home; and who could bear the most vermin—the German found his civilization a deadly handicap.

Dr. Hampf said: "And that goes even more for the Russian women than for the men. Their

power of endurance is unbelievable. There was one occasion when the winter had cut off my battalion from its division. We were only eight miles from our main force but had no heavy ammunition. Whenever we radioed for supplies we were told: impossible, can't get through. Opposite us was a Russian force, smaller than ours, and six miles from its supplies. They kept on shelling our positions day after day, week after week, and our casualties mounted. It drove us half crazy, for we couldn't imagine how they got their shells. Finally two sergeants went out to reconnoiter. One of them came back alive enough to make a report."

He drank some water; then he went on: "The Russians had impressed the women of two nearby villages into clearing a way through the mountainous snowdrifts and then into bringing up ammunition. The women had to carry the heavy shells in baskets on their backs. It was inhuman, but they stood up to it. Our German soldiers couldn't have done it in the best of condition. In the end we had to withdraw. Only a few of us got back, and we who did have never forgotten those Russian women."

Another Red Cross man said: "The difference between the Russians and us Westerners is rather like the one that existed between our *Panzers* and their tanks. Our *Panzers* were complicated, precision-made, and geared to the highest performance—performance, that is, under normal conditions. The Russian tanks, on the other hand, were sim-

ple, crude machines of inferior workmanship. But the complicated *Panzers* broke down in the mud and the ice; whereas the Russian tanks lumbered on because there was so little that could go wrong with them."

Our conversation was interrupted because the prisoner-of-war transport was moving into the station. I watched the arrival of two thousand men and thirty women—ten thousand years of captivity in Siberia behind them, and upon their faces ten times as many years of wretchedness. Fifteen minutes before, they had gone through the Russian border station and had seen the last of the tawdry paraphernalia of Bolshevik propaganda, the drab little red flags, the posters and banners. They had heard the Communists turn into apostles of commiseration, pitying them for having to live under the rule of American imperialism. Under their arms they carried the voluminous *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union* and a dozen pamphlets by Molotov, Vishinsky, Pieck, and Grotewohl—farewell presents that soon would lie discarded in a mountain of waste paper. Bewildered and helpless, they shuffled silently across the platform.

The worst sight were the women. Formerly Red Cross nurses in Meissen, they had been seized by the Russian army in 1945 and sent to German prisoner-of-war camps in Russia. Not one of them was able to walk without assistance. Supported by nurses, and their lice-infested rags smelling of dis-



ease, they stumbled into the isolation ward of the train.

Later I went into the men's sheds. They had gone through their medical examinations, had eaten, and sent off telegrams to their families, many of whom had not heard from them since 1943. They were sitting on their bunks talking. The silence of their arrival had given way to a loud, almost hysterical babble of voices. It was not easy to talk to them. They were fear-ridden and distrustful, and I had to approach them like a pediatrician handling a maltreated child.

It was extraordinary how they went out of their way to draw a distinction between the Russian people and its rulers. The Russian was all right, simple, kindly on the whole (if he wasn't drunk) and "*die armen Menschen*"—the poor humans—"are even worse off than we are." Hard and bitter words were said about the Communist rulers, but they were said quietly and with little hatred. The scorching hatred, I found afterwards, came only when they reached their homes, could make comparisons, look at themselves in the mirror of familiar surroundings, and realize how abysmally they had been degraded and deceived.

When the lights were turned out, I went back to the Red Cross train. Dr. Hampf told me that thirty per cent of the men required hospitalization. "You see," he went on, "there you have a commentary on our lunch-time conversation. These men were mostly in A-1 condition when

they were captured. They will tell you that the ordinary Russian vegetates under worse conditions than they had to endure. Yet the Russians can take it, while the Germans broke down. And remember, for every prisoner who has come back there are two who have died in Russia."

I said that every human being had his breaking point. The Russian people had been under heavy stress for a long time. Revolution, civil war, famine, industrialization, collectivization, the omnipotence of terrorism, the concentration camps, deportations, the German invasion, and four years of war; and after that, new privations, more terror, and more slavery. That was a terrible chain of suffering to be hung around people's necks. How much more could be added to it? Could they, for instance, stand the strain of another war within the next few years, especially the kind of war the Americans could carry into Russia?

They said this was a question that probably was being discussed at a good many military staff conferences all over the world, Moscow and Washington included.

Their own inclination was to disregard the possibility of a crack-up in Russia, unless and until the regime had been weakened by severe military blows. Past experiences had surely shown how disastrous it could be to underestimate both the ruthless organization of the dictatorship and the power of endurance of the people.

I discussed this afterward with a British officer. He was a specialist on Russian affairs and had come to talk to a Ukrainian officer who had deserted from the Soviet Army. He said: "It would be the worst of follies to let our strategic planning be influenced by the assumption that the Russian people are anywhere near the breaking point. I believe, however, that if the West finally does have to call a halt to continued Soviet expansion, the Russian people will prove less submissive to the Communists than in the last war.

"Hitler, with all his bestiality, made it too easy for the Kremlin to unfurl the flag of patriotism. We know, from the thousands of Russian deserters who have come over to us, that many Russians who fought with conviction against the Nazis feel different about war with the democracies. You can paint the wildest picture of British and American imperialism and make people believe it's a true photograph. But in the last analysis you can't get them to feel about it as they felt about the Nazis."

He paused, as a fleet of ambulances drove into the camp, and then went on: "Our strategic planning, however, must leave such thoughts out of account. It must proceed from the thesis that war with the Soviets would mean war at its most furious; that the war would be long and require all of our strength."

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## CHAPTER XVI

### GIRLS WITHOUT GLAMOUR



ON THE FOLLOWING MORNING I visited the German girls who had been in my Grenzgänger group. I found them in a smelly wooden shed where some forty or fifty refugees awaiting clearance were herded together in a space that should not have held more than twenty. Yet there could have been no happier two people in the whole camp. They had been granted permission to stay in Western Germany and were now awaiting assignment to a farm. Their account, like the Russian woman's, would have seemed improbable had it not been verified by the Bavarians. And the Bavarian police, intensely suspicious of all border crossers, scrutinized every "story" with the precision of a microscope.

The girls, who were eighteen years old and attractive, came from Weimar. There they had been working as secretaries in a small factory, together with a woman who had a notorious reputation as a camp follower of Russian troops. One day the two had asked her whether she did not

realize what was being said about her, and she had told them to mind their own business. Shortly afterward a group of masked men had attacked the woman in the dark, cut off her hair and warned her to cease fraternizing with the Russians.

I asked the girls whether they had had any part in this, and both protested their innocence. "But is it common for such attacks to take place?" I asked, and they said that it had happened quite a few times. About a year earlier, Weimar had gone through an epidemic of raping. And although the Soviet authorities had managed now to restore discipline, some of the men whose wives, daughters, and mothers had been violated by the Russians were still causing trouble.

As the perpetrators of the enforced haircut were not discovered, the girls went on, the MVD arrested every critic the woman could remember of her predilection for Russian company—all together four men and seven women. Five hours later they were sent to Schneeberg in the center of the Erzgebirge for work in the uranium mines. "We were not allowed to inform our parents of our fate," they said, "and to this day we've not heard from them."

Object 14 was a new mine in which no uranium ore had yet been found, and which had the rare distinction of possessing good ventilation and safety precautions. The two secretaries, who had

never done manual work before, were detailed to load rock on small trucks. They worked six hours a day the first week, seven the second week, and so on until they were working ten hours a day, including Saturdays. However, food was good and plentiful, and they were surprised to find that physically they stood up well to the ordeal.

Two other women employed on the same detail had also been sent there for minor political offenses. One had written to a friend that she hoped for war, as that was Germany's only chance of being freed of the Russians; the other, a farmer's wife, had been arrested for having called her scraggy old sheepdog by the name of "Ivan."

The women were supervised by a guard who seemed to understand no German and whose use of Russian was limited to the words "quicker" and "hurry up." There came a day when he drove them more mercilessly than ever, and the two friends complained to each other about the Russian "swine." They discovered then that the guard knew German very well. He brought them before the mine commandant, a Russian major, who ordered their transfer to a penal battalion at Johann Georgen Stadt, close to the Czech border.

"We were in good physical shape on our arrival," they said. "A German doctor, supervised by a Russian woman, declared us fit for work as loaders on the ore face. The Frisch Glück shaft was close to a large factory near the station. Half

of it had served as an airplane factory during the war, and the other half as a concentration camp. The whole area was surrounded by a green wooden fence, three yards high and heavily guarded by Russian military police. We were quartered with fifty or sixty other women in the former concentration camp building, whose wooden pens still bore the carved-in names and messages of Hitler's victims. The old airplane factory housed Russian soldiers serving short terms of hard labor. They were clad in rags and treated with a brutality that made us wonder how any of them could survive."

"What about you women?" I asked. "Was it safe to be in the same compound with those prisoners?" They said: "We couldn't have been safer anywhere. The penalty for talking to us was forty strokes with the *nagaika*; the penalty for touching us in any way was death." Then they added that in any case the Russians started work at 7:30 in the morning, and by the time they returned at 8:30 at night they had had twelve hours of hard work and were unfit for anything but sleep.

The two girls had to put pitchblende into aluminum containers and carry these—weighing sixty to eighty pounds—over a distance of a hundred yards through an unventilated passage. The old safety regulations had not permitted miners to be sent to the face within less than an hour after each blasting operation. Yet the women employed

in Frisch Glück were driven back after ten minutes into passages filled with poisonous gases from the explosion and full of mineral dust.

"Every night on leaving the shaft" they said, "we were tested for uranium ore. A rod with a small antenna and connected to an instrument panel was moved over the body of every miner to detect any ore that might be hidden on us."

"Why should the Russians have done that?" I asked.

They said: "We couldn't understand that either. Since we lived in the compound and were kept as prisoners, there was no chance of smuggling any ore out. But perhaps they wanted to make doubly sure. In any case, the Ivan seemed determined not to let any pitchblende fall into unauthorized hands. The moment the ore had been tested by Soviet geologists, the containers were carefully sealed, stacked in railway wagons that also were sealed, and then moved under heavy military guard to an unknown destination."

First in Western Germany, then in Chemnitz, and now again in Moschendorf, I had spoken to some sixty miners from many different mines of the Erzgebirge. They all had made a point of stressing the unusual method of shipping uranium ore in small containers. Later in Washington I found that the experts were equally puzzled. The only conjectures ventured by them were twofold. One was that the Russians are so short of uranium



ore that they are prepared to go to any length to secure its safe arrival in the USSR. The other, that they have found an ore of a superior quality not known before in the Erzgebirge and are trying to keep it a secret.

The two girls continued their account. "We lost weight rapidly" they said, "and could no longer fulfill our daily 'norm.' As a punishment our rations were cut; for every one per cent we fell behind our norm, twenty calories a day were deducted from our food issues. To have carried on like that would have meant the end. For if we could not stand up to our work while eating well, we certainly could not endure it on reduced rations.

"Moreover, sleep was often made impossible by the swarms of vermin, bedbugs, and lice that came over from the Russian quarters, although every night the women spent half an hour delousing each other. If one of us had a fever, she was given the water cure—wrapped in a wet blanket and tied down on a paillasse filled with wet sawdust. No medicines were given, and the tortures of the helpless sick from the bites of the vermin were unbearable."

A pale little girl—she might have been thirteen or fourteen—who had been listening to us, interrupted. "That was nothing. In Aue we were tied down with leather straps. At night the rats came and bit us." She bared her marasmic arms, which

were covered with scars, and, bursting into tears, she said: "That's what the rats did." Afterward I asked the physician who had examined her, and he thought that she must have had at least fifteen vicious rat bites.

"There was only one way out," the girls from Weimar went on. "Every Sunday morning we were addressed by a Mongolian officer who asked for volunteers for the brothels near Annaberg. We decided to go, as the chances of escape seemed to be greater that way, for in Schneeberg we were never allowed outside the compound. Three other women volunteered at the same time, and the Mongolian told us that we would be sent to the officers' quarters, as we were pretty and going of our own free will.

"We were given no more work in the mines, and after a few days of good food and rest, and supplied with a set of new clothes, we left in a truck—five women guarded by two Mongolian soldiers with tommy guns. Near Schwarzenberg, about halfway to our destination, the truck stopped and picked up a load of common prostitutes and tommy gunners, all of whom had been drinking. The Ivans produced several bottles of vodka and *Schnaps*, and by the time we came close to Annaberg they and the women lay in a heap of intoxication."

The two girls managed to escape, a fact that did not seem to bother the Russians very much.

After the soldiers had fired a few wild rounds they went and grabbed two women coming from a field.

My first impulse was to express surprise that the girls allowed that to happen. "How could you let innocent people suffer so that you could escape?" I asked.

They said: "They probably didn't have to suffer for long; quite a few passers-by saw them being picked up, and you can be sure that the local SED officials kicked up a row and that the women were released after a while. The SED may be only stooges of the Russians, but they've enough influence to curb excesses that would be detrimental to the party."

By this time a number of other refugees had joined us, and a lively discussion followed—on the ethics of escaping at somebody else's expense. In the end they all agreed on the maxim that "*Jeder ist sich selbst der Nächste*"—that charity begins at home. "Self-preservation is our most primitive instinct," an elderly school teacher declared, "and many of us wouldn't be here now if we hadn't valued our own lives higher than those of others."

In the evening I dined at the house of Herr Yost, publisher of the American-licensed *Frankenpost*. The guests included Americans stationed in Hof, their ladies, and members of Herr Yost's staff. After the Soviet zone and Moschendorf—living reminders of how little separates man from beast—it was rather a shock to be brought back

to the pleasant trappings of civilization. One moment, hunger, fear, cruelty, dejection, and shabbiness; and the next, candlelight, silver, perfumes, décolleté gowns, and the aroma of wines and cigars.

These first few days back in the American zone were perhaps the queerest part of my enterprise. The element of danger, tension, and adventure I had, of course, left on the other side of the frontier. But to my discomfort I found that returning to a normal state of mind was more difficult than resuming one's proper identity papers.

For three weeks I had put every ounce of energy into living various temporary and assumed roles. An underground friend had warned me that I had to stick to my bogus identities even while talking in my sleep. I had tried hard to train myself accordingly.

But now I could not rid myself of an underlying feeling that I was still a "phoney," and it was several days before I had re-established firm contact with my old self.

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## CHAPTER XVII

### COMMUNIST COURIER



MOSCHENDORF was still irresistible. After a few hours of sleep I was back in the camp, where a policeman was waiting for me. I followed him into a compound surrounded by barbed wire and guarded by Bavarian State police. Inside were some twenty men and women, illegal border crossers about to be deported. They had been interrogated and found to be undesirable elements—common or garden criminals wanted by the Soviet zone police for non-political crimes; workshy elements who thought they could live more comfortably in the Western zones; ex-convicts whom the Russians had shoved over the border and who now were posing as political refugees—these formed the majority of the daily returns to the Soviet zone. “If we did not return them,” a Bavarian official said, “the Russians would send us a million people in no time.”

But there were also some borderline cases, people who professed to be political refugees whose return to the Soviet zone would mean imprison-

ment, deportation, or death. I did not envy the officials on whom lay the responsibility of deciding what to do with them. But, as one official told me, their orders from the State government in Munich were definite. "The Western zones," he said, "are overcrowded and cannot cope with an unlimited population influx from the Russian zone. We are willing to accept political refugees, escapees from slave labor, and skilled workers. On the other hand, the Russians are only too anxious to send us their habitual criminals and loafers, the aged and infirm, and, of course, their political and intelligence agents."

In the group waiting for deportation that morning four men and two women claimed they were going back to certain death. Their moans and tears, their uplifted hands imploring the policeman at the gate to let them speak once more to the camp director, made it hard to believe that they could have been acting. But the officials, while they did not claim infallibility, maintained that experience had proved their decisions right in the great majority of cases.

I had my most painful doubts about one man in particular. He was tall and bronzed, and when I had seen him come into the camp, he had had the bearing and speech of a Prussian officer. He claimed to have been a prisoner of war in Russia and later a police officer in the Soviet zone. He had, his story went, deserted, was caught by the Russians and sentenced to be shot. However, his

execution by means of the Bolshevik speciality of a shot through the cervical spine had been bungled, and the bullet had missed the spinal cord. So sure had the Russians been of his death that they had carted him off to the mortuary without examination. There he had revived and escaped. Then he had hidden until able to cross the border.

Dr. Hampf examined him and declared that the scar on the man's neck was the result not of a revolver shot, but of a stab wound. The Bavarian officials felt that the one fact of misrepresentation deprived him of the benefit of the doubt as far as the remainder of his story was concerned, and ruled that he would be sent back. The man then admitted that he had invented the "*Genickschuss*" episode but that the rest of his story was true. He begged and pleaded to be allowed to stay, but to no avail.

Now he saw me come into the barbed wire cage, and, remembering the silent bystander at his interrogation, he threw himself at my feet, pleading for his life in a heartsickening manner. It was an upsetting experience, and when I had wrenched myself free and left the compound, I said to a police officer: "I wonder if you aren't really sending this man to his death."

"I'm beginning to wonder too," he said, "and damn it, I'm the one who has to take him over to the Russians!"

The last I saw of the German was when the group of human dejection left for the railway

carriage that was to bring them over the border. He struggled fiercely and had to be tied down to a stretcher.

Later in the day—I was talking to the camp director in his office—the police officer in charge of the deportation party came in to make his report. The Russians, after a lot of argument, had accepted all but three, and those they had refused on the ground that there was no evidence of their being Soviet zone residents.

As for the scar-necked ex-officer, he had ceased struggling after the train had left Moschendorf. When he was being handed over to the Soviets, the Bavarian had been amazed to see a wink pass between him and the Russian MVD man in charge. The policeman then turned to me and said: "I really felt sorry I hadn't given him a good kick when he was crying at your knees in the compound. But next time we catch another Russian agent I'm going to make him pay for the feeling I wasted on this comrade today."

His wish came true the following day. A telephone call from Nuremberg announced the arrest of an Eastern zone Communist carrying a large sum of money, presumably intended for the Communist Party in the American zone. He had admitted crossing the border illegally a few days before but refused to say who he was. He gave them the impression of being somebody important. As they had orders from Munich that he should be returned to the Soviet zone rather than



be detained for lengthy identification, he was now on his way to Moschendorf.

Although I had planned to leave the camp the following day, this news made me stay a day longer. The courier turned out to be a middle-aged man, whose heavy athletic build contrasted strangely with his bespectacled, pale face and the tousled red hair that crowned it. During his questioning at Moschendorf he was identified as a vice-chairman, by the name of Klein, of the SED in Brandenburg.

When I expressed surprise that the SED should entrust an important official with a mission of this kind, I was told something of the difficulties the Russians were encountering in financing the Communist Party in Western Germany. For three years the Soviets had maintained a plethora of German money by the simple device of printing occupation marks on plates supplied by Mr. Morgenthau.

The currency reform had now put a disagreeable end to this abundance, and the West German Communist Party was hard pressed to maintain its inflated bureaucracy, palatial office buildings, and modern printing plants. As the new Eastern mark was valueless in Western Germany, the Russians and the SED were making frantic efforts to obtain Western marks in Berlin, the only source open to the Russians at the time. Precious as these funds were, they were entrusted to a

number of leading functionaries, who were then rushed over the border, each carrying amounts ranging between ten and twenty thousand marks.

Klein had been told that he would be sent back the next day. When I went to see him and told him about my travels in the Soviet zone, he was hostile at first and said something about "mercenary press." There was only one chair in the small room, with its walls of roughly sawed timber, and Klein sat on the table, which swayed dangerously under his weight. His hair blended in with the red color on a large map of Asia on the wall behind him, and his long white nose ended where the Ural Mountains began. There was a blue bruise over his left eye which had not been there on his arrival. I asked him about it, and he said: "I don't know what possessed that police officer. The fellow walked up to me and punched me in the face for no apparent reason at all." I explained what had happened the day before. The Communist grimaced and said: "Of course that policeman's feelings were hurt. After all, when you feel sympathetic for once in your life it's a rotten shame to be deceived. Which just goes to show that sympathy is a waste of effort."

I offered him a cigarette, and he said he would smoke it, provided he could have the whole packet. One cigarette alone would only make him crave for more—especially as it was American-made. There was a trace of sarcasm in his voice,

but I had had enough of discussions about American greed and went on to talk about the Soviet zone.

I said that in my three weeks of travel in the zone my outstanding impressions had been: First, that the Russians and the SED were universally hated and that only a very small minority would pick the Communists if there were a free election. That this was true for the working class just as much as for the remnants of the middle class. Second, that living conditions were far below those in Western Germany. Third, that the political terror was as bad as, if not worse than, under Hitler, and that freedom from fear was non-existing. Fourth, that the Soviets seemed to be determined to hold Eastern Germany permanently and use it as a springboard for their ultimate advance further west.

Klein had let me speak without showing any reaction. When I had finished he turned his head and said quietly: "Supposing I agreed with your summary? So what?"

His answer was somewhat unexpected, and I asked: "If you agree, then why do you work for the Russians? Do you think it's right or fair that there should be hunger, fear, and ultimately the threat of a new world war?"

He replied that it wasn't a matter of right or wrong, for to him an action was right that helped him to achieve the ends he had set himself. Nor was it a matter of pity, for he agreed with Hazlitt,

who said: "Never pity people because they are ill-used. They only wait the opportunity to use others just as ill." As for terror, it was the same as with dynamite—you could use it for progress or for mass murder with equal facility, and he thought the Soviets were using it for the former.

He lit himself another cigarette and went on: "I'm a Communist first, and a German afterward. I want to see Communism stretch around the globe from Moscow to Moscow. Germany is only a pawn, perhaps a knight, in our world-wide game of chess. Therefore, if by transforming Eastern Germany into a dictatorship of the proletariat, if by cutting down its standard of living, by imposing the Oder-Neisse frontier, and by removing its factories we further the aims of international Communism, I'm all for it."

I remarked that from the point of view of spreading Communism, Soviet policy in Eastern Germany had been a hindrance rather than a help. It certainly had attracted neither the Western Germans nor other Europeans to the Soviet fold. In fact it had practically killed the Communist Party in the Anglo-American zone.

Klein disagreed strongly. "Your point" he said, "would make sense only if the victory of Communism is primarily dependent on Germany or Western Europe. But it isn't. It depends on the Soviet Union, which is the heart, soul, and brain of Communism. To strengthen the USSR is our most vital task. And if that means cutting off a

German toe—well, that's painful and unpleasant but well worth it."

Since the beginning of the occupation, he went on, German reparations had been of the utmost importance in rebuilding the devastated territories of the Soviet Union. That included the labor of war prisoners, technicians, and scientists in addition to the army of occupation's having been fed and clothed from German supplies.

He climbed down from his table and walked around the tiny cubicle like a lion in a cage.

"You see, it's easy for the Americans and British to throw rocks at us, to point out that they, far from taking anything out of their part of Germany, are spending billions of dollars to help the Germans. First of all that isn't true at all; what the Anglo-Saxons have taken out of Germany in the way of industries, patents, and art treasures has paid for a lot of what they've put into Germany. But secondly, the Soviets couldn't have done anything for the Germans, even if they had wanted to. There would have been the gravest difficulties at home, and since you choose to speak of right and wrong—it wouldn't even have been right to have the Germans remain at their high standard of living while the Russian people's standard was, perhaps, fifty per cent lower."

I said that his argument—that nothing mattered but the welfare of the USSR—would apply to any country that had fallen or might fall under the sway of the Soviets. "To me that sounds like

imperialism far worse than the old-time imperialism of the British, which at any rate had much to offer in return. Whereas Russia, poverty-stricken as it is, can only spread its poverty."

Klein said: "Yes, if subordinating everything to the interests of the Soviet Union were our ultimate aim, I might agree with you. But it's only our first step. Our immediate aim is to overcome the internal exhaustion of the Soviet Union, to consolidate its territorial gains, and to solve those problems—Tito for instance—which have been caused by a temporary overextension of its sphere of influence. Our next move, which is already taking shape in China and Asia, is to carry Communism to victory everywhere. After that has been achieved we'll have reached the stage when the sacrifices now demanded will carry fruit. Then all the peoples united under Communism will share the great wealth produced in a world free from exploitation, and Germany, with its skill and inventive genius, will take a foremost place. Then, for instance, there'll be no more need to transfer factories from Germany to Moscow; then it may even be advantageous from the point of view of a global Soviet economy to concentrate our production of optical instruments at Jena and Dresden. It's this hope, this belief in one world, that makes it possible for us German Communists to carry on."

I was rather amused at his facile switch from the grimness of the Communist reality in Ger-

many to the silver lining of a better universe. I asked whether he truly believed that this worldwide system of Communism would include North and South America and the British Commonwealth. And how was it to come about—by the will of those other nations or as the result of military conquests by the Soviet Union?

Klein replied that if he didn't believe in the global victory of Communism, he would not be a Communist. "After all, that belief is the very basis of our philosophy. You may answer that brotherly love is the basis of Christianity, and where is there brotherliness in a Christian world? But our expectations are based on more solid ground. The capitalist world is dying of its own inherent contradictions—with its periodic depressions and the irresistible urge toward war for the sake of new markets and bigger profits. To this has come the explosive element of the emancipation of the Asiatic nations from imperialist tutelage. Marx and Engels were right enough when they analyzed those economic trends, but I think even they would be surprised if they saw how the mechanism of capitalist self-destruction has been reinforced by psychological factors."

He had grown more and more eloquent and now was vigorously tapping my chest with his right forefinger. "Tell me," he demanded, "where is there today a capitalist society that has the courage to admit that it is capitalist? Not the England of Mr. Attlee. And America? We know

capitalism in its most unbridled form still lives on there, but when you read the speeches of American political and business leaders, they talk about their economic system as people used to talk about venereal disease."

"And what about my question about war entering the picture?" I asked.

Klein replied: "The Soviet leaders do not want war. But they believe it's inevitable. They know that the capitalist world will not, like old soldiers, just fade away, but that the coming American depression and the subsequent demise of the Marshall Plan will drive America into seeking war with the blind fury of the desperado. That's why the Soviets have never ceased, not even at the height of the conflict in World War II, to improve their strategic position vis-à-vis the imperialist powers."

"And, of course, you're sure of winning the war once it breaks out?" I inquired.

He said: "Yes, the Soviet Union, which has smashed Germany almost singlehanded, can be certain of victory. But it's such rubbish to suggest that we need war to gain our objectives" he went on. "We're sitting pretty whatever happens. You know what Churchill said about the Allies standing on their heads in Berlin with the Soviets sitting comfortably in an arm chair. It's the same the world over. We can exploit to the fullest extent the divisions and weaknesses of the capitalist world. We can switch our attacks from Berlin to



Nanking in a matter of days; we are calling the tune, and the imperialist dancer has to do the acrobatics."

"That picture" I suggested, "doesn't look at all like the familiar scene of Wall Street hyenas and Pentagon militarists plotting to crush the Soviet Union."

Klein thought that both pictures were two sides of the same thing. As long as conditions in the capitalist countries were still relatively prosperous, the inclination to go to war against the Soviets was restrained by a wholly unjustified optimism that even better days were around the corner. "In the meantime," he added, "we're making the best of uses of the capitalist's muddleheadedness, and when his head clears and he thinks he's ready to crush us—then it will be too late."

All the time I had felt a nausea rising from the pit of my stomach, and Klein must have been surprised when I left him with a curt goodbye. It was almost unbelievable, I reflected as I walked out of the camp, that men could have learned so little. Wherever one went in Germany, the results of Hitler's megalomania were there to see in an unending hollow-eyed panorama of ruin, broken lives, and burnt-out cities.

Yet the accursed mentality that had driven the Germans and much of the world into destruction—here it was as if nothing had passed between 1938 and 1948. Then the Germans, besotted by their belief in the Führer's infallibility had laughed

at the Western statesmen, with their umbrellas and baggy trousers—those civilian anachronisms without knee boots and bemedaled chests. They had pooh-poohed the world's protests against persecution and terror, and thought them a sign of mental debility. Tolerance was weakness, and patience meant decadence. Like Klein they had congratulated themselves for being so clever, and they also had been cocksure of success. Like him they had talked of the world's evil designs against them.

Klein was one of a number of Communist leaders with whom I talked in Germany. The others included Agatz and Reiman in the Ruhr, Moeller in Hamburg, and Ebert, Kastner, and Nuschke in Berlin. Most of them were more circumspect in their expressions than Klein, but their minds moved in a nihilistic and totalitarian pattern.

All that had changed since 1938, I thought, was the flag and the size of the legions marching behind it. For every Nazi, militarist, and Fascist in the three Axis countries there are now ten times as many Communists in ten times as many countries. The dragon seed of 1917 and 1933<sup>1</sup> has indeed grown into a terrible harvest.

<sup>1</sup> The years of the Bolshevik and Nazi revolutions.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### CONTRASTS IN WESTERN GERMANY



THE RAIL JOURNEY from Hof to Nuremberg is an enjoyable experience at all times; the engine climbs the steep mountain grades so slowly that you can walk alongside it and pick a bunch of the pretty flowers that grow in profusion. Then there is a sudden gathering of speed and a wild rush into the river valleys, past villages that do not seem to have changed since the seventeenth century. The day I left Moschendorf was bright and gusty. Having taken leave of the Soviet zone and the camp, I relaxed luxuriously in the special car reserved for Allied nationals—a whole car to myself. It was the first time that I availed myself of this privilege. On my previous travels in Bizonia the crowded German trains had been the greater attraction, for I could always be sure of a variety of conversations.

At almost every station I watched one or two ragged ex-prisoners of war come out of the last car. There was a curious similarity in their move-

ments. They stepped out of the train cautiously and stood on the gravel. Then very, very slowly they walked toward the station building, under their arms a loaf of white bread and a bottle of water.

After a while I could stand my passive role no longer, and at the next stop I changed over to the tail end of the train. Eight or nine prisoners were sitting by the windows. They looked out on the smiling countryside, which had not changed during the years of their captivity. No one said a word.

I sat down by the side of one who struck me by his youth and his finely cut, pale face. He seemed to be glad to break his silence, for he volunteered the information that he had five more stations to go and that his name was Hans Hauser. I asked him how long he had been away, and he said five years. He had been attending high school when his elder brother was killed at Stalingrad. A few days later, after the capitulation of von Paulus's army, a wounded air-force officer had addressed his class and asked for volunteers for the infantry.

"We were barely seventeen years then," Hans said, "and three of us joined up against the wishes of our parents. After a short training period I went home on leave and got married. In August 1943 we were sent to the Russian front. In November we were captured, and my two friends died in the prison camp last year." He said he

had heard nothing from his wife and parents, and didn't even know whether he had become a father. He had sent a telegram home from Moschendorf the day before, but he did not want to be met at the station and had given his arrival as a day later.

What impressed me about him was the lack of emotion in his words or his voice. I thought that here at last was one man who had not done too badly in Russian captivity. But when the train slowed down before his station, his face became strained and he said: "I think I'll go on to Nuremberg—I'll go home tomorrow."

An old man shrugged his shoulders in disgust and said: "All these youngsters are scared like the dickens."

The train stopped. In a sudden move two men seized Hans and shoved him gently out of the door. He did not struggle and acted as if his will were paralyzed. I made a quick decision and followed him out on the platform. The train rattled off, and Hans just stood there. His hands were trembling, and his eyes were without expression. When I asked him whether I could do anything for him, he did not reply but shuffled off to the station house. The station master, a white-haired, wizened little man, recognized him, and at once there was a cluster of men and women shaking his hands, offering him cigarettes, and patting him on the back. For a moment I thought Hans had

overcome his panic, as he suddenly waxed loquacious about his experiences in Russia.

However, there was no sign of his wanting to go home, and the people in the group, which was growing larger all the time, began to grow restless and uncomfortable. I heard the station master say that he would slip over and tell Hans's people. He went, and Hans kept on talking. The little village had only a few hundred inhabitants, and those present could have told him about his family. They tried to tell him, but he gave them no chance to talk and kept on lecturing.

There was silence when the station master and another man came down the street. Hans stared at them until the two had come quite close and he recognized his younger brother. Then his composure was as chaff in the wind. Like a badly hurt child he lay sobbing in his brother's arms, while the country people stood around in awkward silence, trying to hide their faces from each other. Two men carried Hans into the station until a car could be found to take him home.

While I was waiting for the next train I talked to the station master in a room full of geraniums and Biblical quotations. He said Hans's family had gone to Nuremberg for the day. "He's got a wonderful wife and a fine little boy," he went on. "When no news came from him all these years, we advised her not to torture herself by hoping against hope. But her attitude was that

she would wait for him until the day that the last prisoner had returned from Siberia." The old man looked up to a wooden panel on which were the words: "Be not deceived; God is not mocked." There was a long pause, and then he said: "Nine men went to Russia from this little place. My son was one of them. And only Hans has come back." As I left the Bavarian village I wondered how long it would take for the war to cease being a daily reality amidst Germany's ruins and heart-breaks.

Yet only a few days later my thoughts were very different. As I traveled the length and width of Western Germany, from Munich to Hamburg, and from the industrial Ruhr to the pastures of Schleswig-Holstein, I was struck by the complete change of atmosphere that had taken place even in the few weeks I had been away. The grim, overcrowded ruins, to be sure, were the same. But otherwise the war and its painful aftermath seemed to have receded into the past with unbelievable abruptness.

The new currency, a sharp spurt in production, increased supplies of food and consumer goods, and the restoration of elementary governmental functions to the Germans had created a healthy spirit of enterprise and initiative that even the growing threat of war could not shroud. The difference between American- and British-occupied Germany, on the one side, and Sovietized Germany, on the other, had been remarkable enough

at the time I had crawled into the Soviet zone. Now it was difficult to believe that the two halves of Germany had ever formed an organic whole.

Bled white by Russian reparations, deprived of raw materials by both the Soviets and the Western counterblockade, racked by hunger, deserted by multitudes of skilled men, and weighed down by the dark blanket of fear and oppression, the Soviet zone of occupation has become a malignant tumor in the recovering body of Europe. Its very existence represents a threat to the peace.

Against that somber picture of Communist rule, the American and British military governments, and General Clay in particular, have reason to be proud of their achievements. They have reinstated the rule of law. No German has to fear the Gestapo's or the MVD's knocking at his door in the early hours. The hunger and malnutrition of 1946 and 1947 have been banished by a diet that is primitive but adequate. Industry has been provided with raw materials and encouraged to resume production on a scale that three years ago would have been regarded as Utopian. The value of the mark has been re-established in one of the most brilliant monetary reforms of our times.

In spite of the continued dismantling of industrial plants by the British, industrial production in Western Germany is now greater than it was in 1934 after more than a year of intense effort by Hitler to revive employment. And while a large part of Nazi Germany's production was taken up



by rearmament, the present output is for peaceful purposes only. It has, of course, to supply a larger number of consumers, swollen by the influx of refugees from the East.

Beneath the surrealist skyline of Western Germany's bomb-blasted cities, new shops had appeared in mushroom-like growth. Photo-supply and furnishing stores, music houses, travel bureaus, upholsterers, shops offering leather goods, typewriters, and hardware, had dwarfed the outlets of the former scarcity economy—the stores selling knickknacks, stamps, rationed foods and clothes, jewelry, antiques, and secondhand books.

The gleaming new show windows and impressive one-story street fronts often hid an interior of unfinished walls, roughly timbered tables, and bare cement floors. But their goods were plentiful and of high quality. In almost every street pneumatic drills raised clouds of dust while clearing little corners out of the burned and fallen structures of yesterday. After that, booths made of aluminum sheets salvaged from the inglorious Luftwaffe would sprout up, cater to eager customers three days later, and double their size after a fortnight.

Freshly decorated restaurants and coffee shops suddenly offered tempting meals, wines, or pastries—expensive but unrationed. And by going to the right places one could listen to a fine string quartet in the bargain. Nor was this thriving atmosphere restricted to business. In the country-

side as well as in the industrial and residential areas new construction and repair work was booming. The will to survive and prosper had triumphed indeed.

I soon discovered, however, that underneath this impressive surface of enterprise and reconstruction there was a corroding sickness of the spirit—self-pity and arrogance, resentment and skepticism. I talked to many Germans about my experiences. Invariably—unless they were Communists—they expressed the strongest condemnation of Communist rule. But if I expected them to utter more than a cursory acknowledgment of their own much more fortunate plight, I was quickly undeceived. It took them the shortest time to divert their indignation over the Russian terror in the East to bitter complaints about conditions in the West—the high prices, the shortage of money, the dismantling of factories by the British, the Ruhr statute, and Allied occupation policies in general.

The first time I had heard someone say that it was “criminal” how short money had suddenly become was in a Nuremberg night club crowded to bursting point with German patrons. I thought he was trying to be facetious, for a shortage of money was of the very essence to the current economic revival. Yet in conversation after conversation the same complaint was brought forward, and often it was the starting point for violent political accusations against the Allies. It was note-

worthy, I thought, how the growth of confidence had changed the submissiveness of the Germans during the first phase of Allied occupation into a new and sometimes garrulous nationalism.

Basically the attitude of the Western Germans toward the occupying powers remains negative. And it is not too much to say that the only major asset the Allies have among the Germans is the latters' condemnation of Communism. But while the Western Allies are disliked less than the Russians are hated, there are also different degrees of the Germans' dislike; the French being the most unpopular, the British in the middle, and the Americans favored as the least unpopular.

In this the German reaction reflects the different approaches of the three Allies toward the German problem. The French fear, above all, a revival of German unity and military strength, and their attitude toward the new Western state is entirely guided by considerations of security. The British, more realistic, discount any dangers of a military comeback as long as Allied troops remain in occupation. But Britain is worried over another Germany—the industrial competitor who twice in the space of seventy years has pushed its merchants out of valuable markets; and British policy is acutely aware of the recovery that has taken place in Germany's exporting industries.

In contrast to France and England, American policy is concerned neither with the boggy of military strength nor with the growth of competition.

Its first concern is to see the whole of Europe recover sufficiently so as to be relieved of the burdensome necessity of keeping paupers on the American dole. For, in spite of all the progress of recovery in Western Germany, the United States is still donating half the food consumed by the people of the Western zones. And the occupation of Western Germany costs the American taxpayer the tidy sum of two billion dollars a year.

There is no sign that the Germans are ready for parliamentary self-government. The major parties spend much time squabbling even over issues where vital self-interest demands compromise and co-operation. And the youngest generation is growing up with the same disdain of parliamentary government that was provoked in their fathers by the trials and tribulations of the Weimar Republic.

Except for their dislike of occupation and the revival of nationalism, the mass of the people is politically apathetic. The Communists, on the extreme left, have ceased to be a real force—the barbarism of their rule in Eastern Europe and the assault of the Russians on Berlin have disillusioned all but the intellectual and pecuniary mercenaries who form the inner cadres of the party.

On the extreme right, the Nazis are no longer in existence as an organized political force, but their influence is still strong. Barred from holding official positions, they form well-connected and

well-cemented groups in business, farming, and the professions. They give preference and help to each other and generally "stick together." As they, apart from the criminal elements who are mostly behind lock and key, include a large proportion of Germany's men of ability and experience, they form a potential danger that will require watching.

Yet it is merely silly to maintain, as does Russian propaganda, that the American and British military governments have encouraged or even permitted the revival of Nazi influence and that the Nazis represent an actual and immediate threat. Certainly Nazism as an ideology and indoctrination is as dead as mutton in Germany today. The racial theories of Hitler that formed the basis on which the weeds of intellectual confusion grew have been led so utterly *ad absurdum* that it would be hard to find a sane person in Germany today who believes in the superiority of the Nordic *Herrenvolk*.

While Nazism is dead, nationalism is smoldering under the surface. The potential danger, as things stand at present, is that the administrators, professional men, and business leaders who served Hitler, might seize the leadership in a nationalist revival. However, this problem is entirely controllable as long as the Anglo-American policy makers in Germany remain aware of its importance.

A much greater threat to the stability of the

new West German state comes from the Pyrrhonism and the disillusionment of Germany's youth. I had a taste of this a few nights before returning to the United States. While I was having dinner in the Reichpost Hotel in Heidelberg a group of German students came to see me. I had met them in the afternoon in the old university, and they now came to ask for my help in getting them into the United States Air Force.

When I told them that to the best of my knowledge there was no such thing as an American foreign legion for German airmen, I found it difficult to convince them. In the course of our conversation I said something about feeling encouraged by their desire to fight against Communism and for democracy. They laughed sardonically, and Harald, their spokesman, twenty-one and a former fighter pilot, said: "Against Communism—yes; but for democracy—not us!" "There's nothing to fight for right now," another student said; "only to fight against."

I asked whether they didn't feel that things were looking a lot better in the West, and didn't they think that Western Germany had come a long way since the days of collapse? Harald said: "Sure, there's more butter and bread, more coffee, and more clothing, but what of it? We're not concerned with a few miserable calories. We've lost our ideals and our self-respect. We've no longer a country or a history we can be proud of. And no one has as yet given us anything to

look forward or up to. Look at those umbrella politicians of ours—old men all of them.” I reminded him that “old men” such as Churchill and Stalin had proved a match for the much younger man Hitler, and that all this talk one heard in Germany against old men was leading nowhere. Why didn’t they, the young generation, push their way into the government?

“Ach, it isn’t only the old men,” said one student. “The whole country is demoralized and corrupt. There’s not a farmer who doesn’t hold back on his grain deliveries. There isn’t a German who doesn’t engage in black-marketing. Our officials are tired and inefficient. Our best scientists have sold themselves to England and America—if they haven’t been deported by the Russians. To marry an American and get the hell out of here is the dream of our women. Everybody thinks of himself. And abroad the world is closed to us. We’re not allowed to travel; we’ve no diplomatic representatives, no passports. No,” he finished, “this rump and ruin of a once-great Germany offers us nothing.”

When I asked whether they felt that the pre-Hitler Germany of 1931 or 1932 might have offered them something, they said that they were astonished I could even ask such a question. They went on making comparisons showing how much happier the country of their early childhood had been, until I interrupted and said that I had once had a very similar conversation.

It was in 1931, just before the Reichstag election that brought Hitler his first great victory. I was then a student at Göttingen University, and some friends and I were discussing how we were going to vote. They had made up their minds to vote for the Nazis. The liberal and democratic Germany, which had achieved so much since the collapse of 1918, was "too slow for them"; there was too much talk and too little action. "We need a strong man," they said, and what they got was an early grave on the Russian steppes.

Between the two great wars Germany, with its historical heritage and its art treasures, its cultural life and scenic beauties, and its outstanding social, scientific, and industrial achievements, offered a standard of living higher than almost any other country. But to the modern German the grass has always been greener on the other side of the fence. He did not realize how fortunate he was until it was too late. If in 1932 he had shown just a little more patience and tolerance and a little sense of humor, if he had not thrown the sponge up in despair and put the Nazis in power, the economic crisis would have blown over in Germany as it did in other countries. It scarcely bears thinking about what a different Germany and what a happier Europe there might have been today.

Now the same attitude of mind is belittling what has been salvaged from the catastrophe, and again many Germans can see only what they have



lost and not what they still possess. At the moment that their best qualities—their ingenuity and persistence, their appetite for work, and their flair for improvisation—are beginning to bear fruit, they are again threatening to jeopardize their future by crying for the moon. And unlike these Heidelberg students, not all Germans make their comparisons with the Weimar Republic. Many others look back to the Germany of the swastika and think of it as the good old days.

## CONCLUSION:

### AMERICA'S FRONTIER IS ON THE ELBE



AMERICAN, British, and French policy in Germany will make exacting demands upon the Allies' good judgment in the years to come. The process of returning the administration of the country to German hands must sooner or later culminate in the creation of a West German state. As that moment approaches, the United States above all will be faced with a historic decision of the first magnitude. That decision will be whether to withdraw the American and British armies of occupation or whether to remain in Germany for an indefinite number of years. Two powerful factors will work for evacuation. One, that a Western German state, deprived of the agricultural hinterland now in Polish and Russian hands, cannot be a self-supporting unit, but will remain a financial burden for the occupying powers. The second, that Soviet diplomacy will make every possible effort to induce the Allies to give up their frontier on the Elbe.

No greater single calamity could befall the security of the Western nations, great or small, than if the withdrawal of the Anglo-American forces from Germany were to come to pass. However loudly Soviet propaganda is now trumpeting about the Russian determination to restore German unity and about the necessity of withdrawing the occupation armies from German soil, one thing must be regarded as axiomatic. Soviet Russia will never relinquish its hold over Eastern Germany unless driven out by force of arms. If the Soviets decide to withdraw their troops, they will do so only after they have made sure that a Communist regime will take over the whole of Germany.

The Russians are playing for high stakes in Germany. They are keenly aware of Lenin's words: "He who has Germany has Europe." They have dreamed of a German-Russian revolutionary coalition for a hundred years, long before Lenin and Stalin tried to give it form, and even before Dostoyevsky wrote: "Germany needs us even more than we think, and not for a momentary political alliance, but for an eternal union. Our two great nations are destined to change the face of the world." Now, seventy-two years later, these words stand out in challenging letters on a hundred mammoth signboards erected by the Soviets throughout their zone. The Russians of this generation do not admire the Germans for their souls, as Dostoyevsky did. They admire their technical

skill, their industry, and their organizing capacity—but more than anything else, they admire Germany's geographical location.

Soviet policy in Germany, as everywhere in Europe, is expansionist by virtue of the dynamics of a totalitarian regime that regards world-wide rule as its basic objective. But in addition, the Russians have an urgent practical reason for wanting to change the status quo of Germany's dismemberment. Until the summer of 1948 the Russians benefited greatly from the lifeblood they sucked out of their zone of occupation—in sharp contrast to the United States, which had to subsidize both the American and the British zone. Now, however, the situation has changed drastically.

The Soviet zone is drained and scraped empty. The industries that have not been dismantled are short of skilled workers; their machines are worn out and in urgent need of replacement. The land and water blockade of Berlin has backfired, and the Anglo-American counterblockade has deprived the Soviet zone of vital raw materials. The land reform and the shortage of fertilizers and machinery have reduced the yield of agriculture. Unemployment is sharply on the increase, while the years of hunger have left their mark on the workers' output. Popular discontent has made it necessary for the Russians to pull the reins of terror and persecution tighter and tighter. From being a source of milk and honey for the Russians, the Soviet zone has now become a festering sore.

The rulers of the Kremlin, therefore, have powerful reasons why they should wish for a united Germany—a Germany, that is, united under their deadly control. And whether the struggle for Soviet supremacy shifts from China to Scandinavia—or from Greece to Iran—the conquest of Germany remains a major objective of Communism's global strategy. Germany has become the most exposed frontier of the United States and the British Commonwealth. To render it defenseless by evacuation would be as criminally negligent as it would be to give up the defenses of Alaska or Hawaii.

## APPENDIX

(1) SED, the omnipresent initials of the Soviet zone, stand for *Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands*, Socialist Unity Party of Germany. The SED is the ruling party, and it is the product of a merger of the Communist Party and the Social Democratic Party in the Soviet zone. The following abstract from an official report, prepared for the information of American Military Government personnel in Germany, gives a clear picture of the role of the SED in German politics.

Originally a Socialist project, the idea of the merger was taken over by the Communist Party when it became apparent that it would serve a useful purpose by enabling the Communists to split, weaken and absorb the Social Democrats and thus, with Soviet backing, gain practically undisputed control of political life in the Soviet zone and, it was hoped, in Berlin.

The idea was supported by the Soviet military administration as calculated to advance Soviet interests by putting all political life in the hands of a party which is geared to the Soviet political system.

This maneuver must not be considered as an isolated case of merely local political significance. It takes its place in a broad pattern of events occurring in all eastern and central European countries where there is an active Communist movement. The merger of the Communist and Social Democratic parties in the Soviet zone is the most important step along a road leading to the establishment of a single "state" party. It is clear that this party, whatever its protestations may be, has been formed by and is addicted to methods which have nothing in common with democracy as it is understood by Americans.

No case of democratic procedure is to be found in the entire background of the new party, with the sole exception of the SPD referendum in Berlin on March 31, 1946, whose results were entirely ignored.

The record makes it difficult to distinguish the utterances or methods employed by the leaders and backers of the new party from many slogans and methods used by the Nazi Party. Yet it is this new Socialist Unity Party which now dominates civil administration and politics in the Soviet zone, and which is thus in a powerful position to influence the course of events in a future united Germany.

*(U.S. Information Bulletin, June 1, 1948.)*

# INDEX

- Agatz, Willy, 179  
 Air bombing, 45, 82, 93, 94,  
   117  
 Asia, 175  
 Atomic bomb, 47, 84, 139  
 Attlee, Clement, 176  
 Aue, 121, 162  
 Austria, 4
- Bacteriological warfare, 47  
 Bad Harzburg, 10  
 Bautzen, 98, 99, 100, 101  
 Bechler, Major, 86  
 Berlin, 3, 4, 7, 22, 24, 60, 76,  
   86  
 Berlin airlift, 49, 97, 105  
 Black market, 27, 28, 30, 38,  
   76, 115, 127, 128, 134, 192  
 Bode River, 17  
 Border control, 9, 13, 143  
 Border crossing, 7, 10, 11, 12-  
   19, 131, 145-8  
 Brandenburg, 5, 86  
 Braunlage-Elend, 10  
 British policy in Germany,  
   115, 185-9, 195-6  
 Bruehl's Terrace, 94  
 Brunswick, 20  
 Buchenwald and Belsen, 137  
 Buna, 81
- Chemnitz, 28, 121, 126, 136  
 Christian Democratic Union,  
   62  
 Churchill, Winston, 3, 46, 177,  
   191  
 Clay, Lucius, 104, 185  
 Collective responsibility, 115-  
   20  
 Communist Party, 5, 169, 170,  
   173, 179, 189  
 Culture, 70, 109-10  
 Currency reform: Soviet, 29,  
   127, 170; Western, 29, 41,  
   170, 184, 185-7  
 Czechoslovakia, 98-101, 112-  
   13, 138
- Dekanozov, Vladimir, 103-4  
 Deportations, 34-6, 43, 66, 73,  
   131, 139, 167  
 Dewey, Thomas E., 105  
 Dickens, Charles, 133  
 Domovina, 99-102  
 Dostoyevsky, F. M., 196  
 Dresden, 79, 91-6, 103-4, 109,  
   114-15, 121-2, 133  
 Dismantling, 35-8, 83-4, 174-5
- East Prussia, 5, 69  
 Ebert, Fr. Jun., 179



- Elbe River, 72, 95, 97, 111-12, 150  
 Erzgebirge, 136-9  
 Espenhaim, 81  
 European Advisory Commission, 4  
 Farming, 19, 70  
 Frankfurt, 20, 22, 94  
 French policy in Germany, 115, 188  
 German Nationalism, 115, 187, 194  
 Gernrode, 22, 25  
 Giraud, 112  
 Goebbels, Joseph P., 87, 114  
 Goring, Hermann, 83, 94  
 Gorlitz, 23, 25, 101  
 Göttingen, 35, 192  
 Gow, James, 54  
 Greece, 59  
 Grotewohl, 78, 153  
 Guide, 7, 21, 143-4  
 Halle, 58, 84  
 Hamburg, 117, 184  
 Hampf, Dr., 150, 154, 168  
 Hannover, 20  
 Harzgerode, 23  
 Harz Mountains, 7-18  
 Hazlitt, William, 172  
 Heidelberg, 191  
 Hexentanzplatz, 18  
 Hitler, Adolf, 44-5, 47, 86, 103, 114, 117, 119, 178, 192  
 Hof, 147-8, 164  
 Identity check, 23, 67, 122-5, 140, 147-8  
 I. G. Farben, 81  
 Jena, 29, 30, 35-42, 97  
 Jews, 117, 131  
 Joachimsthal, 138  
 Johann Georgen Stadt, 159  
 Kaliningrad, 88  
 Kant chocolate works, 28  
 Karlshorst, 90  
 Kastner, 179  
 Klein, 103, 170-9  
 Königsberg, 88  
 Königstein, 112  
 Kuczynski, Jurgen, 123-4  
 Land reform, 70, 72  
 Leipzig, 20, 24-40, 51-74, 97  
 Lenin, Nikolai, 196  
 Leuna, 81-4  
 Liberal Democratic Party, 62  
 Lignite, 50  
 London Conference, 12  
 Lübeck, 94  
 Magdeburg, 20, 49  
 Magdesprung, 26  
 Markgraf, Capt., 86  
 Marshall, George C., 104, 106  
 Marshall Plan, 29, 55-6, 66, 73, 177  
 Marx and Engels, 176  
 Mecklenburg, 4, 5  
 Meisenberg, 96  
 Merseburg, 80, 84

- Moeller, 179  
 Molotov, V. M., 113, 153  
 Morgenthau, 72-3, 170  
 Moschendorf, 148-82  
 Munich, 94, 184  
 MVD, 13, 21, 88, 158, 169, 185
- Napoleonic Wars, 95  
 National Committee of Free Germany, 85-6  
 National Democratic Party, 87  
 National Press Club, 11  
 National Socialism, 85-90, 119, 189  
 National Zeitung, 87  
 Natonek, 62-5  
 Nuremberg, 94, 180, 187  
 Nuschke, 179  
 Nutrition, 32-4, 77-9, 185
- Oberkochen, 35  
 Oder-Neisse border, 5, 98, 115, 173
- Panslavism, 100  
 Paulus, von, 85, 181  
 People's Control, 19, 49  
 Perthes, Justus, 80  
 Pieck, 78, 153  
 Pirna, 112  
 Plauen, 136, 139-44  
 Poland, 5, 98  
 Police: Soviet controlled, 13, 22-3, 26, 83, 88, 136; U.S. controlled, 147; women, 39-40, 69
- Prisoners of war, 112-13, 153-5, 180-4  
 Prostitution, 61, 138, 141, 163
- Reconstruction, 37; Soviet zone, 80, 83, Western zone, 186  
 Reichstag election, 192  
 Reimann, 179  
 Religion, 95  
 Reparations, 50, 174  
 Repnin, Prince, 95  
 Rhau, Lt., 148  
 Ribbentrop, Joachim, 90, 114  
 Roosevelt, Franklin D., 3, 106
- Saar annexation, 115  
 Sachsenhausen, 79  
 Saxe-Anhalt, 4, 5, 18  
 Saxony, 5, 70, 79, 91, 94, 96, 101  
 Schnaps, 79  
 Schneeberg, 158  
 Schütz, Prof., 43  
 Schwerin, 86  
 SED, 32, 43, 62-3, 65, 76-7, 144, 164, 170, 172, 199  
 Seitz, Major, 86  
 Seydlitz, von, 85  
 Slav colonization, 98-9  
 Slave labor, 136-7, 158  
 Social Democratic Party, 52, 71, 79  
 Sokolovsky, Marshal, 6, 86, 90, 104, 113  
 Sorbes, 99-102  
 Soviet agent, 169

- Soviet Army, 6, 12, 20, 39, 73-4, 81-2, 151, 156  
 Soviet policy, 72-6, 84-9, 108-9, 119, 120, 156, 172-8, 195-8  
 Soviet propaganda, 22, 31, 40, 49, 56, 58-9, 82, 96-7, 104, 108, 144, 153, 196  
 State Planning Commission, 106  
 Stalin, Joseph, 3, 46, 103, 127, 191, 196  
 Stalingrad, 48, 181  
 Steidle, Col., 86  
 Streicher, 114  
  
 Taft-Hartley Act, 59  
 Tagesspiegel, 76  
 Telegraf, Berlin, 76  
 Thuringia, 4, 5, 20  
 Tito, Marshal, 175  
 Transportation, 23, 28, 49-51  
 Trogen, 147  
 Truman, Harry S., 105  
 Tulpanov, Col., 87  
 Turinsk, 149  
  
 Underground, anti-Communist, 7, 20, 52, 79  
 Union Time Ltd., 124  
 Unity, German, 25, 42, 196  
  
 Uranium Institute Librarian, 130  
 Uranium mines, 115, 121-2, 134, 136-9, 158-63  
 U.S.A., 24, 53-7, 106-7, 176-7, 184-5, 188-9; policy in Germany, 195, 197-8  
 U.S. Army, 74, 195  
 U.S. Constabulary, 148  
  
 Vishinsky, 153  
 Voice of America, 53  
 Vladivostok, 72  
  
 Wallace, Henry, 105-6  
 Warmbad, 122  
 Washington, D.C., 13, 161  
 Weimar, 30  
 Winkel-Zeiss, 35  
 Wittenberge, 28  
 Wolkenstein, 121, 123, 128  
 World War II, 44-7, 119, 150-1  
  
 Yalta Agreement, 3  
 Yermashov, 40, 44-7  
 Yost, 164  
  
 Zeiss, 32-7  
 Zeiss-Opton, 35  
 Zeitz, 78  
 Zschopau River, 125



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